



BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

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Black tales for white children

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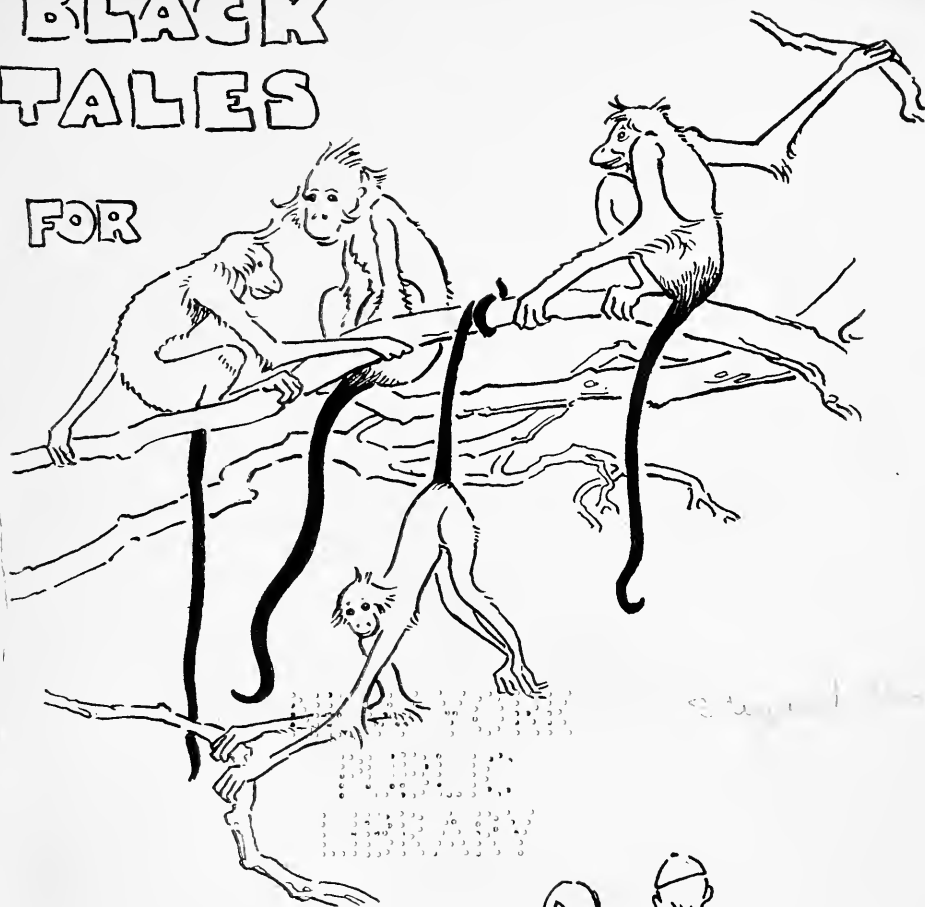
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BLACK TALES FOR
WHITE CHILDREN

These BLACK TALES for WHITE CHILDREN, being a collection of Swahili Stories, have been translated and arranged by Capt. C. H. STIGAND, interpreter in Swahili and author of "The Land of Zinj," and Mrs. C. H. STIGAND, and have been illustrated by JOHN HARGRAVE, author of "LONECRAFT."

BLACK TALES

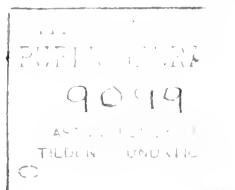
FOR



WHITE CHILDREN



BOSTON & NEW YORK: HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY



First published 1914

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FOREWORD

MANY hundreds of years ago Arab sailors began to explore the east coast of Africa, being driven southwards in their sailing vessels by the northerly winds or monsoons of one part of the year and returning to their homes by the help of the southerly winds of the other half of the year.

As trade with the coast grew, Persians and Arabs founded settlements on the coast, and the numerous islands and towns and kingdoms grew up. These original settlers mixed with the black races of the interior, and it is from this mixture that the people now called Swahili have sprung. The word Swahili, or Sawaheli, comes from the Arabic word Sawahil, meaning coast, and hence the east coast of Africa.

A language derived partly from Arabic and partly from several African Bantu tongues came into being. This is called Kisawaheli, or the Swahili language, and different dialects of it are spoken practically the whole length of the East African coast and the islands close to it.



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The stories which follow are drawn from a number heard at different times and in different places, and they have been written down as nearly as possible as told by the Swahili himself. Some were told by story-tellers in the coast towns, others were overheard on the march in the interior or round the camp-fire at night.

These stories have not been kept in any book or written document, but have been repeated from mouth to mouth, perhaps for hundreds of years. Either they are narrated by a professional story-teller of a coast town, who hands on his stock of them to his son after him, or they are told by mothers to their children almost from the time they can toddle. These children, when they grow up, tell them, in their turn, to their children, but the story is always told in the evening.

During the day-time there is work to do and no good woman has time to waste in idleness. She must go out into the fields with her baby strapped on her back and hoe and weed the crops in the hot sun, she must grind the maize or millet into flour between two stones, winnow the grain, cook her husband's dinner, draw the water,

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collect firewood, and perform many other duties.

When the day's work is done and the evening meal is finished they sit round the fire outside the hut, for they have no lamps or even electric light. Perhaps they sit in a little courtyard, surrounded by a high palisade, for fear of the lions, or perhaps, no lions having been heard of late, they sit in the cleared space in the centre of the village, each family by its little fire. Then the mother tell her stories to the children, who soon get to know them all by heart, yet never tire of hearing them again and again. "Tell us, mother, the story of Nunda, so that we may join in the chorus—

"Siye mwanangu siye, siye Nunda mlawatu."

(It is not he, my child, not Nunda the eater of folk.)

Or it may be on a journey after a long and tiring day's march, the evening meal is cooked and eaten, and then the tired porters lie round the camp-fire and call on one of their number to tell a story, "So that we may forget the toil of the day."

As the Swahili is himself a mixture of the

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Arab and the African, so his stories form a curious combination of the elements of both races. The finer and more witty points are generally of Arab origin, whilst the more homely and jungle scenes are drawn from Africa. The jin or fairy, both good and bad, has been brought from Arabia with the Sultan and the idea of wealth and precious stones.

The folk-lore, certain kinds of demons, and the jungle folk are entirely African.

Such stories as "The Cat's Tail," "The Fools," and "Shani and Tabak" were told in the dialects of Shela, Pate and Lamu, in which places there is a greater proportion of Arab blood. "Kajikarangi," "The Hunters and the Big Snake," and "Segu" are types of tales told by more African natives in the dialect of Zanzibar and the Mgao and Mrima coasts.

The Sultan is the king or chief. As the African coast kingdoms were often very small he was, as often as not, the chief of only one town or island, whilst in the next town another Sultan reigned.

The Wazir, or Vizier of Turkey, is his prime minister or head man.

FOREWORD

Where one Sultan reigned over several towns or islands he used to put into each a governor, called Wali or Liwali.

The elephant, from his size, is to the native a creature inspiring awe, who eats and tramples down his crops and breaks his fences.

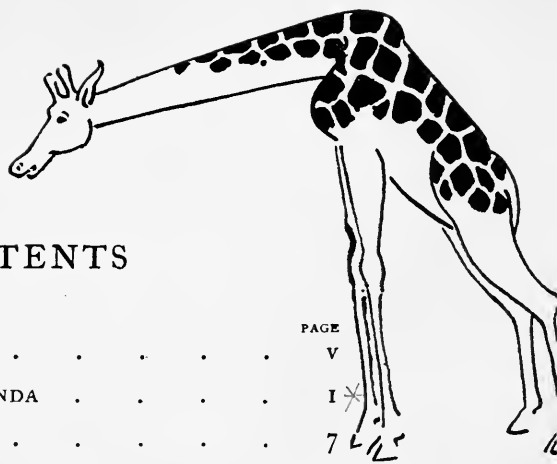
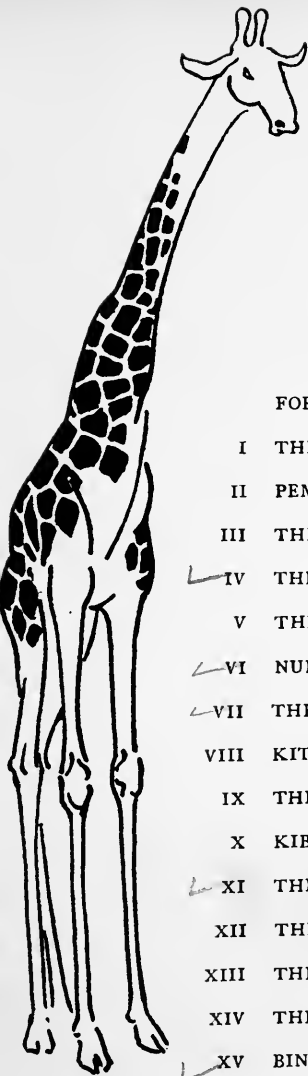
The hyaena is harmless, and so only a subject for derision.

Over the whole of Central Africa the hare is considered as the most cunning of all the animals. African slaves have even brought tales of his wiles to America, where, under the name of "Brer Rabbit," he has retained his African reputation for guile.

I must acknowledge my indebtedness to my mother for arranging the rhymes which occur from time to time in the text.

C. H. STIGAND.





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THE LION OF MANDA

I

ONCE upon a time there was a lion who lived on the island called Manda, which is opposite Shela town, and the people of Shela heard it roaring nightly. In Shela was a rich merchant, and one day he gave out in the bazaar : "I will pay one hundred dollars to whosoever will go and sleep alone one night on the opposite shore, in Manda island." But for fear of the lion no man would do this.

Now in that same town was a youth and his wife who were very poor, for they had nothing. When this youth heard the talk of the town, he came to his wife and said, "There is a man who will give a hundred dollars to any one who will sleep on the opposite side one night. I will go and sleep there."

B



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His wife said to him, "Do not go, my husband, the lion will eat you."

He said, "Let me go, for if Allah loves me I will not die, and by this means we will get the wherewithal to buy some food."

Then she said to him, "Go. May Allah preserve you."

So that youth, when evening fell, took a canoe and paddled over to Manda, and there lay down on the shore.

Now, when the youth had gone, his wife there behind him was sad because she had let him go, and her heart was very heavy with fear for her husband. So she took some embers and some sticks of wood and went down on to Shela beach, and there she kindled a little fire and tended it all night, so that her young man on the opposite side might see it and not be afraid.

In the morning he returned safely to Shela and went to claim his hundred dollars. But the merchant said, "You have not earned them, for you saw the fire that your wife made, and so you were not afraid."

The youth, when he heard those words, was

THE LION OF MANDA

very angry, and went to accuse the merchant before the Sultan.

So the Sultan called that merchant and asked him why he had not paid the youth his hundred dollars.

The merchant said, "Truly, I did not pay him the dollars because he did not earn them, for he had a fire to comfort him the whole night long. Now, Sultan, see if my words are not true and judge between us."

The Sultan then asked the youth, "Did you have a fire?" The youth replied that his wife had made a fire, so the Sultan, who wished to favour the rich merchant, said, "Then you did not earn the money."

As that youth went forth from the presence of the Sultan, he jostled against a sage, who asked him his news; so he told him how he had been defrauded of his hundred dollars.

Then said the sage, "If I get your money for you, what will you give me?" The youth said, "I will give you a third." So they agreed together after that manner.



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The youth then went his way, and the sage came to the Sultan and said to him, "I invite you to food at noon to-morrow in my plantation." The Sultan replied, "Thank you, I will come."

Then the sage returned to his house and made ready. He slaughtered an ox and prepared the meat in pots, but did not cook it. When the Sultan arrived next day at noon, the sage had the pots of meat placed in one place apart, and he had fires made in other places, far away from where he had put the pots. Then, having told his servants what to do, he came and sat on the verandah with the Sultan, and they conversed with one another.

After a while he arose and shouted to his servants, "Oh, Bakari and Sadi, stoke well the fires and turn over the meat."

When twelve o'clock had long passed the Sultan, feeling hungry, asked the sage, "Is not the food yet ready?"

The sage answered, "The meat is not yet done." So they continued to converse, till the Sultan became very cross owing to his hunger, and said, "Surely the food must be ready now."

THE LION OF MANDA

So the sage called out, "Oh, Bakari, and oh, Sadi, is not the food ready?"

They answered him, "Not yet, master." He then said, "Stoke up the fires well and turn the meat, that we may soon get our food;" and they answered him, "We hear and obey, master."

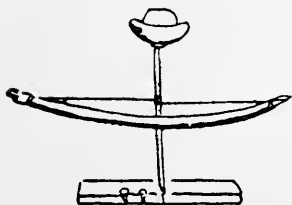
The Sultan then said, "Surely the meat must be cooked *now*, after all this time." So he arose to look for himself, and behold! he saw the fires all on one side of the courtyard, with servants busily feeding them, and the cooking pots all on the other side, also with servants tending them.

He turned to the sage and said, "How is the meat to become cooked, and the pots are in one place and the fires in another?" The sage replied, "They will cook like that, my master."

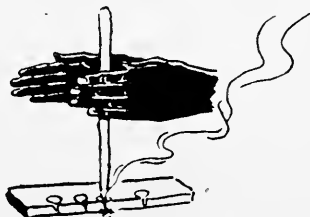
Then was the Sultan very wroth and said, "It is impossible to cook food like that."

"Indeed no," gravely answered the sage; "for is not the case the same between those cooking pots and their fires and the youth to whom you yesterday refused his hundred dollars and his fire, which was on the opposite shore?"

The Sultan then said, "Your words are true,



THE FIRE-DRILL



TWIRLING-STICKS



THE FIRE.

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oh sage! The youth did earn his hundred dollars. Send and tell the merchant to pay him at once."

So the youth got his dollars for sleeping on the island of Manda, and the sage did not accept from him the fee he had asked for. This is the story of the lion of Manda.



PEMBA MUHORI

THERE was once upon a time a man and his wife, and the wife gave birth to seven sons, and the seventh was called Hapendeki, and he was the last.

And these sons grew and grew till one day the youngest, Hapendeki, said to his father and mother, "What goal is there in life for a man?" and they answered, "The goal in life for a man is to find a nice woman and marry her and rest in peace."

So he said, "If that indeed be the aim of man you must look for a wife for me."

And they said to him, "You are too young, you will not be able to manage a wife."

And he said, "Never mind, look for a wife for me."

And they said, "No, you are not old enough yet."

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So he answered them, "All right, if you won't get me a wife I will look for one for myself."

So he went and searched till he found a wife, and then there were shouts and trills as he brought her home and married her.

So they stayed indoors the appointed time of the honeymoon, and when it was nearly accomplished his wife said to Hapendeki, "Now that the honeymoon is nearly over I want some nice clothes to show myself in when the honeymoon is completed and I go out once more."

So the husband went out and sought all the Indians' and Banyans' shops, and bought all the best clothes he could in the town, and brought home one man's load of different kinds of clothes. And he said to her, "Here, my wife, look at the clothes I have brought you."

So she opened the parcel and looked at the things and said, "Do you call these clothes, my husband? Do you think that I could go out in such things, my husband?"

So the husband took ship and went to Maskat, and there he bought all the most beautiful clothes he could find, and dresses of silk and all kinds

PEMBA MUHORI

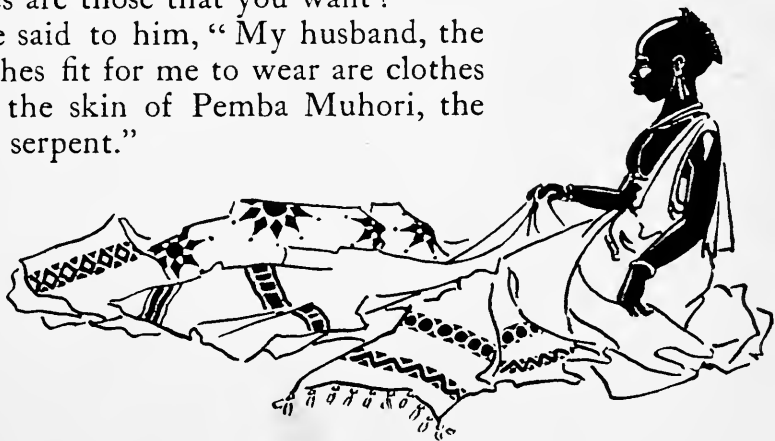
of garments, two bales full, and with these he returned home.

So he took ship with his two bales of clothes and arrived home again, and had them carried up to his house.

When he came into the house his wife cooked food for him, and he sat down and ate, and when he had finished he said to his wife, "Now open those two bales and see the clothes I have brought you." So she opened the bales and looked at the clothes and said, "Do you call these clothes? you must be a fool to have bought things like these. Are these things fit for your wife to wear? Do you wish me to wear grass and bark cloth? Do you imagine that I could wear things like these?"

So he said, "My wife, these are the best that I could find, now say, what sort of clothes are those that you want?"

So she said to him, "My husband, the only clothes fit for me to wear are clothes made of the skin of Pemba Muhori, the great sea serpent."



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Next day he went to his father and mother and told them how he had bought every kind of expensive clothes for his wife, but that she refused to wear anything but the skin of Pemba Muhori.

His father and mother said to him, "Did not we tell you that you would not be able to manage a wife?" and his elder brothers said, "You, the youngest, must needs marry before us, your elder brothers, and this is what comes of it."

So Hapendeki said to his mother, "I do not want words or advice, all I want you to do is to make seven loaves for me, and to make up a parcel for me containing these seven loaves and seven cigarettes and seven matches."

So his mother baked seven loaves and made up the parcel, and next day he took his sword and the parcel and set out. He travelled and travelled through plains and forests, plains and forests, for one month, till at the end of the month he came to a big lake. He sat down on the shore and ate one loaf and lit one cigarette and smoked it and thought, "Pemba Muhori must be in this lake," so he sang—

PEMBA MUHORI

“Pemba Muhori, Pemba Muhori, are you in there?
My wife has sent for your skin to wear.”

All was silent, so he picked up his load and journeyed on through desert and hills, desert and hills, till he came to a lake larger still, at the end of the second month, and he sat down and ate a loaf and smoked a cigarette and sang—

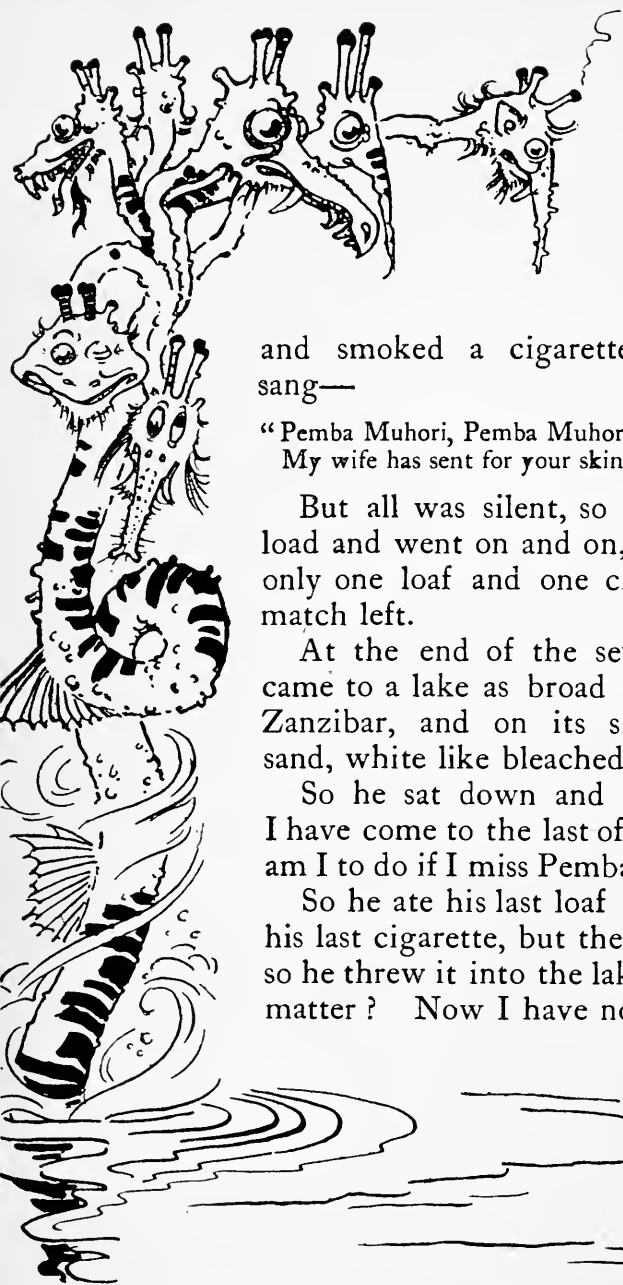
“Pemba Muhori, Pemba Muhori, are you in there?
My wife has sent for your skin to wear.”

All was silent, so he travelled on and on till he came to a third and bigger lake, and now he had spent three months in the way.

So he sat down on the shore and ate a loaf and smoked a cigarette and sang again, but all was silent, so he travelled on, and at the end of each month he came to a bigger lake, and he ate one loaf and smoked one cigarette.

Till, at the end of the sixth month, he came to an enormous lake, bigger than any before, and its breadth was the distance of Tabora from the coast.

And he said, “Pemba Muhori can hardly miss being in here,” so he ate a loaf and lit



and smoked a cigarette and then he sang—

“Pemba Muhori, Pemba Muhori, are you in there ?
My wife has sent for your skin to wear.”

But all was silent, so he picked up his load and went on and on, and now he had only one loaf and one cigarette and one match left.

At the end of the seventh month he came to a lake as broad as from Ujiji to Zanzibar, and on its shores was white sand, white like bleached calico.

So he sat down and thought, “Now I have come to the last of my food. What am I to do if I miss Pemba Muhori here ?”

So he ate his last loaf and tried to light his last cigarette, but the match went out, so he threw it into the lake saying, “What matter ? Now I have nothing.”



PEMBA MUHORI

Then he sang—

“Pemba Muhori, Pemba Muhori, are you in there?
My wife has sent for your skin to wear.”

Then there was a noise like thunder, and great waves went foaming away to the shores, and Pemba Muhori appeared with his seven heads and said, “Who is making use of my name?”

So he answered, “It is I, Hapendeki,” and took his sword and smote off one head, and picking it up he put it on one side. Then the snake came and said, “Who are you that are not worth eating at a mouthful?”

Hapendeki took his sword and cut off another head and the snake disappeared in the water again, and he took the head and laid it on one side.

And so the snake came at him again till he had cut off the third, fourth and fifth head and put them on one side.

Then the snake said, “What sort of witchcraft is this, that you who are so small think you can kill me?” and he rushed at him again, and Hapendeki cut off his sixth head and put it on one side. Then the snake rose up and came

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at him, and Hapendeki cut off his seventh head and ran away.

Then the snake's body writhed and twisted, and he lashed so with his tail that the mountains fell into the lake and the waves tore up the hillsides.

When all was still again, Hapendeki returned and picked up the heads, which were a heavy load, and as he picked up the sixth he staggered, but he said to himself, "I must take them all home to show my wife." So he made an effort and picked up the seventh head, and when he had them all, he suddenly looked round and behold, he found that his journey home was finished and that he was already in his house.

His wife was astonished to see him and said, "My husband, how did you return?" and he answered, "By the grace of God."

Then she cooked food for him and said, "Now eat." And he said to her, "Last time I ate here you told me that I was a fool for not getting you the clothes you wanted, now look first in the parcel I have brought and see if they are indeed the clothes you want before I eat."

PEMBA MUHORI

So his wife looked at the load and was astonished, and the neighbours came and looked and were astonished, for there were the seven heads of Pemba Muhori.

Then that youth thought to himself, "I must now teach my wife a lesson, as she has put me to a lot of trouble and worry ;" so he told her to prepare a large feast for the next day, and he invited all his friends to come.

Next day his friends came and they all ate till they were full, and he then said to his wife, "My wife, bring me water that I may drink."

His wife brought him water, and he looked at it and said to her, "Do you call this water, do you think that this is fit for your husband to drink ?"

So she went away and brought him milk, and he said to her, "What is this you have brought me? Am I a baby that you think that I can drink this?"

So she went and brought him honey-wine, and he said to her, "Am I a drunkard that when I ask for water you bring me wine?"

So she said to him, "My husband, what kind of water do you want? tell me, that I may get it for you."

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So he said, "That water you brought me smelt of frogs. I want water from a lake in which there are no frogs."

So she took a water jar, and putting it on her head went forth, and he, taking his sword and putting it over his shoulder, went after her, and followed at a distance to see what she would do.

And she travelled on and on till she came to a big lake and said to herself, "Perhaps this water will do." So she sang—

"My husband has sent me out to draw
Water no frog has touched with his claw."

And the frogs answered, "K—r—r—r, K—r—r—r."

So she took her water jar and travelled on and on till she came to another big lake and sang again—

"My husband has sent me out to draw
Water no frog has touched with his claw."

"K—r—r—r, K—r—r—r."

So she travelled on and on, and her husband followed, watching from behind, and every lake

PEMBA MUHORI

she came to and sang the frogs only answered,
“K—r—r—r, K—r—r—r.”

At last she came to a great lake, and there she sang—

“My husband has sent me out to draw
Water no frog has touched with his claw.”

All was silent, so she said, “This must indeed be the water my husband wants.” So she filled her water jar, and, turning round to go home, she saw a huge demon coming forth saying, “I smell man, I smell man.”

Her husband behind, who knew how to talk to demons, called out,

“Demon bwe ! bwe ! bwe !
Demon bwe ! bwe ! bwe !
My wife run quickly past me,
Demon bwe ! bwe ! bwe !”

So his wife ran past him, and as the demon followed after her he cut off his tail, and at that moment he found himself in his house again and his wife found herself on the threshold.

She tried to take the water jar from her head to pass in at the door, but she found that it had

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stuck there, and she was not able to move it.

Then a neighbour came forward and tried to pull it off, but he could not, then came two men and then five and then twenty, but they could not get the water jar off. Then fifty tried, but failed, and at last five hundred men tried to pull it off, but it was of no avail.

Then came out the husband and said, "My wife, put down that water jar," and he slapped her in the face and at that moment the water jar fell off.

His wife said to him, "What do you strike me for?" and her husband said, "My wife, do you not see that that was the medicine that broke the charm and released you from the water jar? Did you not see that five hundred men were unable to get it off, and that I, by just slapping you, was able to get it off?" But the woman would not be satisfied, so went off to the Sultan and accused her husband before the Sultan of beating her. So the Sultan sent his soldiers to fetch Hapendeki, and when he was brought said to him, "How is this that you have beaten this woman your wife?"



“Demon bwe ! bwe ! bwe !”

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So Hapendeki told him the story from first to last, and the Sultan said to him, "Have you the heads of Pemba Muhori?"

He answered and said, "They are there in my house."

So the Sultan said, "Bring them here that I may know that your story is true."

So Hapendeki said, "I will bring them here at eight o'clock to-night, but I want you to turn out all the lights when I come and only turn them on when I tell you."

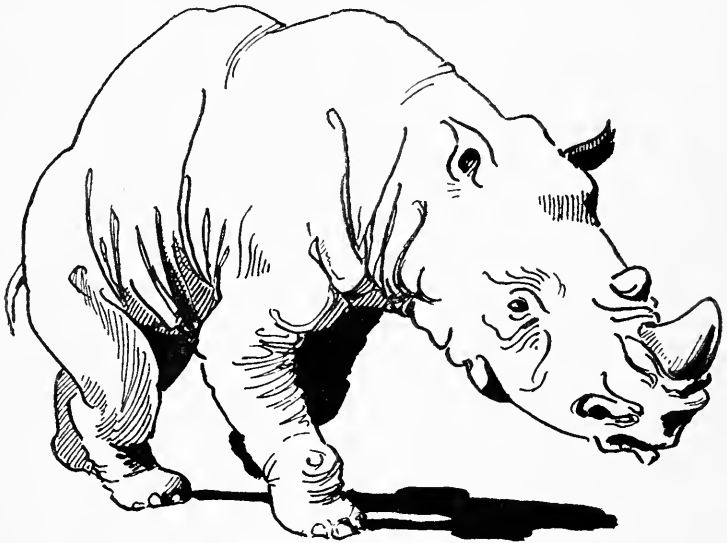
So at eight o'clock Hapendeki brought the seven heads, and all the lights were turned out, and he arranged them in front of the Sultan's palace, which was seven storied, one head he put on the roof and one head on every storey.

When the lights were turned on everybody fell back in fear and astonishment, for there, shining and glittering in the light, were the seven heads of Pemba Muhori.

So the trumpets pealed and the cannons roared and there was great rejoicing, and the Sultan gave his daughter in marriage to Hapendeki.

PEMBA MUHORI

And this is the end of the story, and whether it is good or whether it is bad I do not know, but if it is good, its goodness belongs to all, and if it is bad, its badness belongs to him who tells it alone.



III

THE CAT'S TAIL

AT a place called Lamu lived a woman and her husband. One day, whilst they were at meat, a cat came in and looked at them. Now these two people loved to disagree with each other.

So that woman said to the man, "I say that the tail of a cat is stuck in."

The man said to his wife, "No, it is not stuck in; it sprouts out."

So they wrangled together about this matter for many days. At last they disputed so noisily that their neighbours threatened to drive them out of the village. Then, as neither the husband nor the wife would give in, they decided to seek the wise man who lived at Shela, for sure he would know and could settle this great question.

So they each took a dollar and tied it in the corner of their robes and set out for Shela, quarrelling so hard all the way that everybody turned round to stare at them.



The Wise man who lived at Shela.

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At last they arrived at the town of Shela and found the wise man at his house. When he saw the big round dollars bulging out of their clothes he smiled upon them and invited them in.

Then the woman asked him, "Look up for us in your learned books whether a cat's tail is stuck in or whether it sprouts out."

The man said, "No. Look up whether it does not sprout out or whether it is stuck in."

The wise man saw that they were fools, so he replied—

"Give me my fee : one dollar for the answer to the question as to whether the cat's tail is stuck in or whether it sprouts out, and one dollar for the answer as to whether it sprouts out or is stuck in."

So they each gave him a dollar, and the wise man made great pretence at looking through his books. Finally he said, "You are both wrong ; the cat's tail is neither stuck in nor does it sprout out, and it neither sprouts out nor is it stuck in, but it is just stuck on."

They then returned home in silence, and the wise man stuck to their dollars.

THE YOUNG THIEF



IV

ONCE upon a time there was a man and he wished to marry. So he went to the Seers and asked them to foretell his future.

The Seers looked at their books and said to him, "If you marry you will certainly have a child, a very beautiful boy, but with one blemish ; he will be a thief, the biggest thief that ever was."

So that man said, "Never mind, even if he be a thief ; I should like to have a son."

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

So he married, and in due time a child was born, a beautiful boy.

The child was carefully brought up till he was old enough to have a teacher. Then the father engaged a professor to come and teach him every day. He built a house a little distance from the town and put him in it, and that professor came every morning and taught him during the day, and in the evening returned home. Now the father ordered the professor never to let his son see any other soul but himself, and he thought by that means that his son would escape the fate that had been decreed by the Seers; for if he never saw any other person he could have no one to teach him to steal.

One day the professor came, and he told the lad about a horse of the Sultan's, which used to go out to exercise by itself and return by itself, and was of great strength and speed.

Then that youth asked where was the Sultan's palace, and his professor took him up on to the flat roof and pointed out to him the palace and its neighbourhood.

That night, after the professor left, the youth slipped out and came to the Sultan's

THE YOUNG THIEF

stables, stole the horse, and returned home with it.

Next day the professor was a little late in coming, so the lad asked him, "Sheikh, why have you delayed to-day?" The professor said, "I stayed to hear the news. Behold, some one has stolen the Sultan's horse which I told you about yesterday."

Then that lad asked, "What does the Sultan propose to do?"

The old man replied, "He thought of sending out his soldiers, but then he heard of a seer who is able to detect a thief by looking at his books, so he is going to ask him first."

So the youth asked, "Where does that seer live?"

The professor then pointed out the seer's house and its neighbourhood.

That night the youth slipped out and came to the seer's house and found that the seer was out. He saw his wife and said to her—

"My mistress, the seer has sent me to fetch his box of books."

So the wife brought out the box containing all his books of magic and gave them to him,

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

and he took them and returned with them to his house.

Next day his professor was late, and when he came he said to him, "Father, why have you delayed?"

The old man said, "I stopped to hear the news. Do you remember the seer of whom I told you yesterday, who was to find out the thief for the Sultan? Well, he has now been robbed of his books of magic."

The youth asked, "What does the Sultan intend to do?"

The old man replied, "He was about to send out his soldiers, and then he heard that there was a magician who is able to detect a thief by casting charms, so he is going to consult him."

Then the youth asked, "Where does the magician live?"

So the old man took him on the roof and pointed out the magician's house and its neighbourhood.

That night, after the professor had gone, the youth went out and came to the house of the magician. He found him out, but saw his wife and said to her, "Mother, I fear to ask you, for

THE YOUNG THIEF

was not the seer robbed in like manner yesterday ? but the magician has sent me to fetch his bag of charms."

That woman said, "Have no fear ; the thief's not you, my child ;" and she gave him the bag of charms, and he took them and went to his house.

Next day, when the professor came, he asked for the news, and he said, "Did I not tell you yesterday that the Sultan was going to get a magician to tell him the thief by casting his charms ? Well, last night the magician had his bag of charms stolen."

Then the youth asked, "What is the Sultan going to do ?"

The old man answered, "He was going to send out his soldiers to catch the thief, but he heard that a certain woman said she knew who the thief was, and so he is going to pay her to tell him."

The youth asked where the woman lived, and the old man pointed out her house to him.

That evening the youth went out, and came to the house of that woman and found her outside, and he said to her, "Mother, I am thirsty ; give me a drink of water."

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So she went to the well to draw some water, and the youth came behind her and pushed her in. Then he went into the house and took her clothes and jewellery and brought them back to his house.

Next day, when the professor came, he asked the news, and he said, "My son, I told you yesterday that there was a woman who said that she could tell the Sultan the name of the thief. Well, last night the thief came and pushed her into the well and stole her things."

Then that youth asked, "What does the Sultan propose to do?"

The old man replied, "He is sending his soldiers out to look for the thief."

That night, after the professor had gone, the youth dressed up as a soldier, and went out and met the soldiers of the Sultan looking for the thief.

He said to them, "That is not the way to look for a thief. The way to look for a thief is to sit down very quietly in a place, and then perhaps you will see or hear him."

So he brought them all to one place and made them sit down, and one by one they all

THE YOUNG THIEF

fell asleep. When they were all asleep he took their weapons and all their clothes he could carry and came with them to his house.

Next day, when the professor came, he asked him the news, and he said, "Last night the Sultan sent his soldiers out to look for the thief and behold, the thief stole their arms and their clothes, so that they returned naked."

Then the youth asked, "And now, what does the Sultan propose to do?"

The old man said, "To-night the Sultan goes himself to look for the thief."

The youth said, "That is good, for the wisdom of Sultans is great."

That night the youth dressed up as a woman and scented himself and went out. He saw in the distance a lamp, and knew that it was the Sultan looking for the thief, so he passed near. When the Sultan smelt those goodly scents he turned round to see whence they came, and he saw a very beautiful woman.

He asked, "Who are you?"

The lad replied, "I was just returning home when I saw your light, so I stepped aside to let you pass."

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The Sultan said, "You must come and talk with me a little."

That lad said, "No, I must go home."

They were just outside the prison, so at last the youth consented to go in and talk for a little while with the Sultan.

When they got inside the courtyard, the youth took a pair of leg-irons and asked the Sultan, "What are these?"

The Sultan replied, "Those are the leg-irons with which we fasten our prisoners."

Then that youth said, "Oh, fasten them on me, that I may see how they work."

The Sultan said, "No, you are a woman, but I will put them on to show you," and he put them on.

The youth looked up and saw a gang-chain and asked, "What is that?"

The Sultan said, "That is what we put round their necks, and the end is fastened to the wall."

So the youth said, "Oh, put it on my neck, that I may see what it is like."

The Sultan replied, "No, you are a woman, but I will put it on my neck to show you;" so he put it on.

THE YOUNG THIEF

Then the youth took the key of the leg-irons and of the gang-chain, and looked up and saw a whip and said, "What is that?"

"That," said the Sultan, "is a whip with which we whip our prisoners if they are bad."

So the youth picked up the whip and began beating the Sultan. After the first few strokes the Sultan said, "Stop, that is enough fun-making."

But the youth went on and beat him soundly, and then went out, leaving the Sultan in chains and chained to the wall, and he also locked the door of the prison and took the key and went home. Next day the Sultan was found to be in the prison, and they could not get in to let him out or free him.

So a crier was sent round the town to cry, "Any one who can deliver the Sultan from prison will be given a free pardon for any offence he has committed."

So, when the cries came to that youth's house, he said, "Oho, I want that as a certificate in writing before I will say what I know."

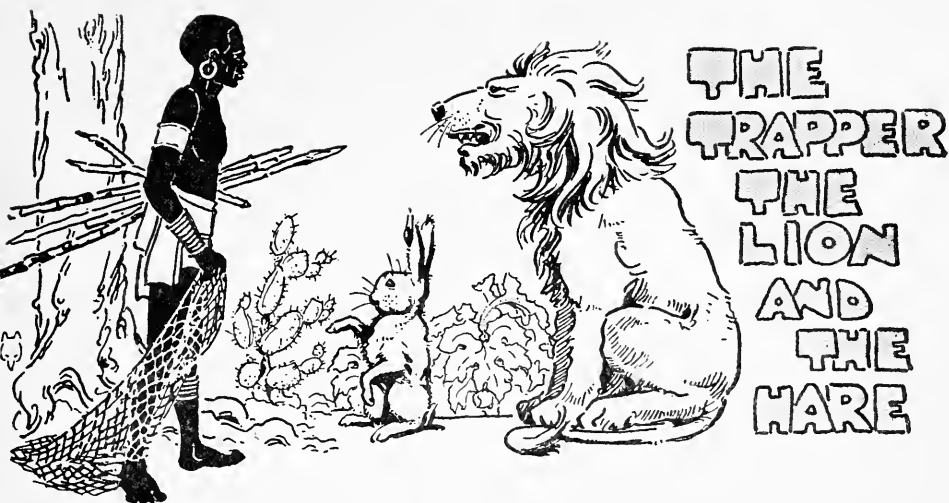
When these words were brought to the Wazir, he had a document drawn up, giving

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a free pardon to any one who would deliver the Sultan. Then he brought it round to the prison for the Sultan's signature, and as they could not get it in they pushed it through the window on the end of a long pole. Then the Sultan signed it, and it was given to that youth, who handed over the key of the prison and of the chains and fetters. After the Sultan had been released he called that youth to his palace, and the youth took the horse, and the sage's books of magic, and the magician's bag of charms, and the woman's clothes and jewellery, and the soldiers' arms and clothes, and came to the palace.

When the Sultan heard his story he said that he was indeed a very clever youth, so he made him his Wazir.

This is the story of the man who would have a child, even though he should be a thief.



V

ONCE upon a time there was a man, and his work was to set traps. Every morning he went out and set his traps for game, and in the evening he returned to his house, for he was a poor man, and there was no money in the house, and so this was, indeed, his manner of living.

One day he went forth, and when he came to his traps he met a lion.

And the lion said to him, "Have you not heard that this forest belongs to me, and that there is no leave to hunt here? for I am the only person who hunts here, and now, you son of Adam, you

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have come to hunt in my forest. Do you not know that I have the strength of forty men ? ”

And the man answered him, “ Oh, master, I had not the news that this was your forest, so now make what plan you like, for I can do nothing.”

Then the lion said to him, “ We will make this arrangement together. You may hunt game here, but of every animal you catch you must give me the heart, the liver and the entrails, but the meat you may take yourself.”

So they made this arrangement together, and every day the man set his traps, and of the game he caught he gave the lion the heart, liver and entrails, but the meat he took home, and his wife was glad.

Till one day his wife said to him, “ How is it that of all the game you bring here, you bring the meat only, but the entrails you leave there in the bush ? Now I am feeling sick, and the liver of game is what I long for.”

The man said, “ Do you not know that the entrails of all the game belong to the lion, who is, indeed, the master of the forest ? ”

And his wife said to him, “ I know very well



“ See, that stone is falling, it will kill us both.”

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

that you give the heart and the liver to another woman every day, and if it indeed be the lion who takes them, I will follow you to-morrow and see."

So the man said, "My wife, you must not come with me to the forest, for in the forest are fierce animals and thorns and difficulties and dangers."

So they slept, and in the morning the man went off to his work, and when he had gone his wife followed him in the way and came to the first and the second trap, but she entered into the third trap and was caught.

When the man returned from the woods he did not find his wife, and he looked for her till one of the neighbours said, "I saw your wife follow you in the way this morning."

And the man thought to himself, "My wife must surely have followed me to see where the entrails of the game went to."

So he took the way and came to the first and the second trap, but at the third he saw his wife caught, and beside her sat the lion.

And the lion said, "See what a nice animal you have caught to-day ; be quick and cut it up that I may get my share."

THE TRAPPER, LION, AND HARE

The man said, "I cannot cut her up, for she is my wife."

The lion said, "Was not our agreement that I should have the entrails of every animal you caught? Now give me my share or I will kill you."

At that moment there came forth a hare, and when he had heard the case he said to the lion, "This man speaks not truly when he says that this animal is his wife, he only wishes to get all the meat for himself. Now my plan is that you and the man follow me, and I will show you that this is not his wife."

So the man and the lion followed the hare, and the hare and the man passed the second trap, but the lion entered in, and was caught up by the noose in the air.

Then the hare said to the man, "Now take your wife quickly and run away, for if he gets out he will kill us both."

So the man took his wife and ran away quickly.

Now the lion stayed in the trap, but after some time the rope rotted and he got out, but he was weak and maimed and thin. After

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several days he caught a pala, and then he caught a zebra, and then he grew strong again.

Then he said, "Now I will go and kill that hare who took me in." So he went to the house of the hare, which was under a big rock, and seized the hare.

Now over the rock was a great boulder poised, and the hare said to the lion, "See, that stone is falling, it will kill us both." The lion looked up and saw the boulder and leaped from under it, but when he found that it did not fall he looked for the hare, but the hare had gone.

Then he sought for the hare many days, and at last he found where he lived in a cave, so he went in and sat there to wait for him till he returned.

And as the hare returned he saw the footprints of the lion on the path leading to his house, so he went and stood near the house and said, "Salaam, oh house." But the lion was not to be deceived, and he answered not.

Then the hare said again, "Salaam, house," and again the lion was silent.

So the hare said to himself, "Every day when I pass here and say, 'Salaam, oh house,' the

THE TRAPPER, LION, AND HARE

house answers and says, 'And to you salaams,' but to-day it is silent ; perhaps there is some one inside."

So the lion answered from inside, "And to you salaams." And the hare said, "Oh, lion, I hear your voice you have come here to kill me."

Then the hare ran off, and the lion came out and went his way. Some time afterwards the hare met the lion in the way, and seeing that he could not escape he said, "I am tired of running away from you, old lion, so now I will come with you and be your servant."

The lion agreed, and the hare followed the lion.

Shortly afterwards the lion killed a zebra, and he said to the hare, "Now, my servant, cook the fat, that I may eat."

So the hare collected firewood and made a fire, and putting a little fat in the fire, said, "Open your mouth, old lion, and taste."

And the lion tasted the fat and saw that it was sweet and good, and said, "Hurry up and cook the rest, that I may eat."

The hare ran off and fetched a stone and put it in the fire till it was red hot and then, taking

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hold of it with two sticks, said, "Open your mouth, old lion."

The lion opened his mouth and the hare popped the stone in; the lion gulped it down and it burnt his inside and killed him.

The hare then skinned the lion, and taking the skin he went his way till he came to a cave where thirty hyaenas were holding a dance.

The hare took the lion's skin and propped it up against the entrance to the cave, and tied it with string to one of the hyaena's tail.

When the hyaenas smelt the smell of a lion they looked round and saw a lion crouching at the entrance.

They took counsel together and said, "It were better that we remain inside here, for if we go out we will certainly be killed, and after a little time he will go away."

They waited the first and the second day, but when the third day came and the lion did not go away they took counsel together again, saying, "We will all die of hunger here. It were better that we eat one of our number that the rest may live."

So they ate one of their number, and the next day they did likewise, and so on every day, till at

THE TRAPPER, LION, AND HARE

last there was only one left alive, and this was the one with the skin tied to his tail.

And he thought to himself, "If I stay here I shall die of hunger. It would be better if I tried to rush past the lion and get away."

So he rushed out of the cave across the plain, and the skin followed him, till at last the rope broke, and he looked round and saw the hare coming to pick up the skin.

Then was the hyaena very angry, and rushed after the hare and caught him.

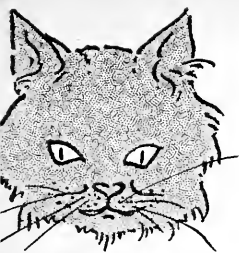
The hare said, "I am but a small mouthful. If you leave me, I will show you where a whole rhino has just died."

So the hyaena let go and said to him, "I will follow you and see ; but if you have deceived me I will kill you."

So the hare led him down to the stream and said, "He fell in here this morning. If you put your nose in the water you will smell him."

So the hyaena put his nose in the water to smell if the rhino was there, and he was seized by the crocodiles and dragged into the river and eaten.

This is the end of the story of the hunter and the lion and the hare, which ends here.



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VI

NUNDA THE SLAYER AND THE ORIGIN OF THE ONE-EYED

ONCE upon a time there was a Sultan, and he had seven sons, and he gave them ships, and they all went abroad to trade, and came back with much wealth, all except the youngest, who brought back only a dog and a cat, and he kept the dog and the cat till they grew and grew, and at last the dog died.

Then he kept the cat, and it grew and grew, till at last one day it ate a whole goat.

And it still grew, till one day the son said to the Sultan, "My father, give me an ox for my cat to eat," and he gave him an ox, and the cat grew and grew, till at last he finished all the camels and oxen of the Sultan.

So the Sultan said to his son, "You must turn that cat out of the town, as it has eaten all our wealth."



NUNDA THE SLAYER

So that cat was turned out and went to live in the bush, and there it grew and grew, and it was called Nunda.

Till one day it came into the town and ate everybody in that town, all the people and the Sultan himself and all his sons ; but the Sultan's wife was upstairs, and she shut the door and was saved, but everybody else in the town was eaten.

And when the Nunda thought that he had finished everybody he went again into the bush and there he lived.

And the Sultan's wife stayed in the upper storey, and there she gave birth to a son, and she called him Mohammed.

And Mohammed grew up, till one day he said to his mother, "How is it that we two sit alone and there are no other people here?"

And his mother said to him, "Go and open the window and look out." And he opened the window and looked out.

And she said to him, "What do you see?" And he said, "I see many houses."

Then she said to him, "All those houses were once full of people, but the Nunda has killed

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and eaten them all, even your father and brothers he has eaten."

So Mohammed said, "Did my father have any weapons?" And his mother said, "He used to go to war, and guns and spears and bows and arrows and shields were the weapons he had."

Mohammed said to her, "Bows and arrows are the weapons I want."

So he took a bow and three hundred arrows and set forth, and travelled through the bush, on and on, till one day he met a rhino.

He said to himself, "This must be the Nunda," so he shot his arrows and shot and shot till he had used all his three hundred arrows and the rhino fell dead.

Then he cut off a leg and set out for home, carrying it with him. When he got near the house he sung, "This is Nunda, this is Nunda who kills people."

And his mother, looking out from the upper storey, sang, "My child, that is not Nunda who kills people."

When he came into the house she said, "My son, that is not Nunda ; it is a rhino."

NUNDA THE SLAYER

So he said, "I will sleep here to-night, and to-morrow I will set out again."

In the morning he took seven bows and one thousand arrows and set out, and travelled and travelled, through forests and plains, till he came to a garden, and there he sat down.

Presently a great dust arose in the hills and came down into the plains.

So Mohammed climbed a tree and waited, saying, "This indeed must be Nunda."

Presently a great animal came out of the dust and came down to the garden to drink, and he drank from three o'clock in the afternoon to six o'clock in the evening.

And Mohammed, up in the tree, said to himself, "If I am to die I am already dead, and if I am to escape I have already escaped;" so he started shooting his arrows, and when he had shot five hundred the animal looked up from drinking, but he did not yet know that he was hit.

So Mohammed took his other five hundred arrows and shot and shot till he had used them all, and then he threw away his bow.

Then the animal arose and went to the tree where Mohammed sat, and jumped and bounded

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in his pain, but he did not reach him, and in the morning when Mohammed looked down he saw that the animal was dead. Then he descended and cut off a leg, and taking it started for home.

When he got near home he sang, "This is Nunda, this is Nunda who kills people."

And his mother looked out from the upper storey and sang, "My child, that is he, Nunda who eats people."

And she came down to meet him and said, "Hang the leg up in the verandah, and I will go and get you water to wash with."

So he hung up the leg and went inside to wash himself.

And the leg said, "By Allah, I feel cold here." And his mother called out, "Mohammed." "Yes, mother." "Why is the leg talking there in the verandah?"

So Mohammed came out from the bath-room and took the leg and hung it up at the top of the house, and went back to wash.

Presently the leg said, "I hear some one washing there." And his mother called out, "That leg is still talking upstairs."

NUNDA THE SLAYER

And Mohammed came out again and said, "Give me my knife ; I will cut it open and see what is inside."

So he took his knife and cut open the leg, and there he found his father and brothers and all the people of that town inside the leg ; but in cutting it open he stabbed one man in the face and put out his eye.

And this man, when he came out from the leg, was very angry indeed and said, "Why have you put out my eye ? See, you have let all the other people out quite whole ; but me, you have put out my eye."

And Mohammed said, "I am very sorry. I did not know what was in the leg, and my knife slipped in cutting it open, so now be content that you have escaped and forgive me."

But the man said, "I will not forgive you. You have put out my eye and now you must let me put out your eye."

Mohammed said, "I do not agree."

The man said, "If you don't agree to my putting out your eye we must fight."

Mohammed said, "I don't want many words, so now listen to what I have got to say. Let

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one of us take a rifle and five cartridges and the other stones, and let us go down to the shore and fight. So now choose which you will take."

So One-eye chose to take the rifle and five rounds, and Mohammed took a cloth and filled it with stones, and they went down to the shore.

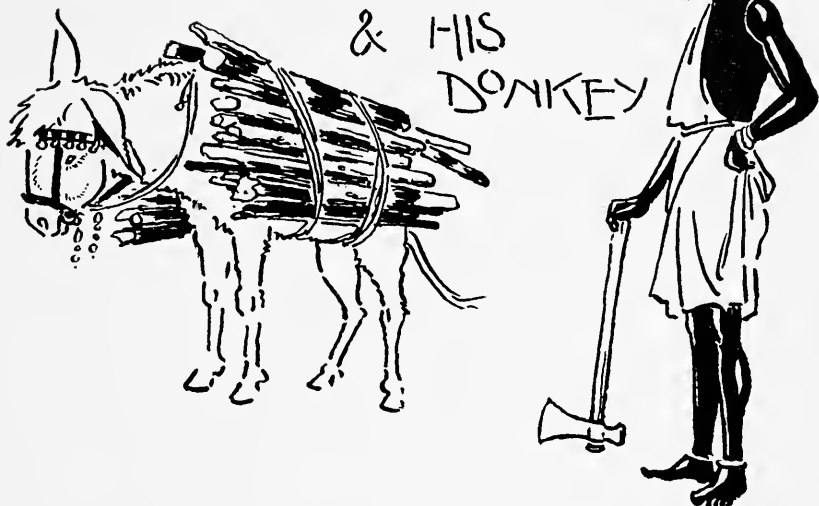
And Mohammed said, "Now, One-eye, you have the rifle, you begin."

So One-eye fired the first round and missed, and the second and missed, and so on all five rounds.

Then Mohammed came near with his bag of stones, and hit him here and there and all over, and came closer and stoned him, and hit him in the other eye, putting that out, till he went down on his knees and said, "I repent ; I am satisfied."

And this is the beginning of all one-eyed and blind men in the world, and this is how they began.

THE WOODCUTTER & HIS DONKEY



VII

ONCE upon a time there was a poor woodcutter, and his work was to go out every day into the forest and cut wood. In the evening he used to load up his donkey with the wood he had cut and return to the town, where he sold it. The money he got each day was only sufficient for the food of himself and his wife for that day.

They lived like that many months and many

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days, and they were very, very poor ; till one day the woodcutter went out to the forest as usual to cut wood. As he was at work he looked up and saw a number of birds sitting on the top of a tree, with their beaks wide open. And there was a cloud of insects about the tree, and they fell into the birds' mouths.

Then the woodcutter said to himself, " Behold these birds, they sit on the top of a tree with their mouths open, and God feeds them by bringing insects to fall into their mouths. They do not have to work or even to move from their perch ; they just open their mouths and are fed. Why should I have to work hard all day and then only get just enough to eat ? Why should not God feed me like that ? "

So he loaded up his donkey with the wood he had already cut and returned to the town. When he reached his house he went in and got into bed.

His wife went out and sold the wood, and then bought some food and returned home. When she found her husband in bed she said, " My husband, are you ill ? "

He replied, " No, my wife, I am waiting for

WOODCUTTER AND HIS DONKEY

God to feed me as I saw Him feed the birds to-day."

So she cooked the food and then called to him, "The food is ready, my husband."

He replied, "No. To-day I saw that God fed the birds without them having to move. They just opened their mouths and the food dropped in, so now I am not going to move out of bed, but am just going to wait here in bed to be fed also."

So his wife brought his food in to him there in bed and he ate and slept. Next morning his wife said to him, "Arise, my husband, for it is time that you went to work."

He replied, "No, I am not going to work ; I am just going to stop here in bed and wait to be fed."

His wife said, "But, my husband, we have no food and no money in the house. What are we to do if you do not go and work ?"

He answered, "Never mind. God is able to feed the birds when they are hungry, and so He is able to feed me."

So he stopped there in bed. Now a neighbour of his had a vision that night that in a

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certain cave was a great treasure stored. He wanted to go and search for it, and when he heard that the woodcutter was not going to work that day he thought that he would borrow his donkey to bring back the wealth, if his vision came true.

So he came to borrow the donkey ; but as he was a very mean man he did not want to tell of his vision or for what purpose he wanted the donkey. He knocked at the door, and the wife came and opened it, and he asked to see the woodcutter.

The wife went to call her husband, but he said, "Tell him to come in here ; I will not get up."

So the neighbour came in and asked the woodcutter to lend him his donkey, and said, "If I have a prosperous journey I will give you a few coppers."

The woodcutter agreed, and he took the donkey and went to the place about which he had dreamed. There he found the cave, and when he entered he saw piles of money, gold, silver and copper.

So he gathered up first all the gold and then

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all the silver and filled the donkey's saddle-bags, till at last they would hold no more.

He was loth to leave the copper, so he left the donkey outside the cave and went back and began to stuff his clothes with the copper coins. Whilst he was doing this the mouth of the cave fell in, and he was unable to get out.

The donkey waited and waited till at last, when evening was near, seeing no one coming, it set off and returned home, and came to the door of the house. The wife heard a noise at the door and said, "My husband, there is some one at the door ; get up and open it to see who it is."

He replied, "No, my wife, I am going to stop just here in bed till God brings me my food."

So the wife opened the door, and the donkey walked in to where the woodcutter was lying in bed. When he looked at it he saw that the saddle-bags were stuffed full of gold and silver.

The man and his wife waited for the return of the neighbour, but when he did not come back they made plans together what they should do.

The husband said to his wife, "Behold, my wife, the neighbours all know that we are very poor and have no money in the house. Even if

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

we were to take a little money and buy food to-morrow they will say that we have stolen it, so how are we to spend all this wealth? Even if we go away they will know that we have not the money to expend on a journey, so what shall we do?"

So they planned together, and then they crept out, when everybody was asleep, and put a little money on the doorstep of each house near them. On one they put ten reals, on another five, and so on.

In the morning when every one opened their doors, behold, some silver coins on the doorstep. So the neighbours said to one another, "I got five reals; what did you get?" and so on. Another said, "Surely some Jin must have put all this money here in the night."

Then were the neighbours not surprised when they saw that the woodcutter and his wife had a little money wherewith to buy food. So the woodcutter said to his neighbours, "I found twenty reals on my doorstep this morning, and I and my wife are going to expend this money on travelling to a far country, where perhaps we will meet with better fortune than here."



WOODCUTTER AND HIS DONKEY

So they bought the necessities for a long journey with a little of that money, and then the greater part they packed up on the donkey and journeyed off.

They travelled on and on, till at last they came to a country where they were not known, and there they bought a house and settled down, and the people said, "Behold, these must be some rich folk who have come from a far country."

So they lived there in great splendour, and spent their money and gave praise to God.

This is the story of the woodcutter who had trust in God, and it finishes here.

VIII

KITANGATANGA OF THE SEA

THERE was once a man, and he lived at Kilwa.
And that man married a wife, and built a hut,
in which they stayed.
Everything that
woman asked for he
gave her, only that hut
he had built without
a door.



He himself, when
he went abroad and
returned, used to climb
up a ladder and get
in at the window, and
when he went away
he took away the
ladder. So that woman
stayed in that hut

and was not able to go out, not even for a little,
and so she was sick of heart.

KITANGATANGA OF THE SEA

Now when her mother heard about this she came and dug a hole under the wall, so that she was able to come and see her daughter whenever the husband had gone out. The mouth of that hole the woman covered over with matting, so that that man, her husband, did not get to see it.

Now that man was a merchant, and used to trade up and down the coast even as far as Maskat.

One day he came home to his wife and said to her, "My wife, it is time that I went up the coast trading, so in a week's time I will start and will go to Zanzibar and Maskat, and then, after the space of one year, I will return again."

So his wife said to him, "It is well, my husband ; may you go and return in safety."

When her husband went away again she got out quickly by her tunnel and came to her mother and said, "My mother, my husband is going to travel away for a year and leave me in my hut. Now you must go quickly and get a fast ship ready for me and tell no one."

Then she returned and sat in the hut, and in the evening her husband returned and climbed in by that window of his.

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

After a week had passed the husband took leave of his wife and went down to the harbour, got on board his ship and set sail for Zanzibar.

After he had gone, the wife came out quickly and went down to the harbour and got on board the vessel her mother had prepared for her and set sail behind him.

In the middle of the ocean that boat of hers passed his. He looked at it and called out, "Who is that in the ship that is passing me?"

She answered, "It is I, my name is Kitanganga of the sea."

She arrived at Zanzibar, moored her vessel and went ashore, and found that house where he stayed and entered it and sat down. Presently her husband arrived, moored his boat and went up to that house.

When he saw that woman he was surprised and said to her, "How like you are to my wife whom I left in Kilwa!"

So he talked to her for a while and then asked, "Are you married?"

She replied, "No, I am a widow."

Then he said, "If you will marry me I will settle on you a hundred reals."

KITANGATANGA OF THE SEA

So that woman agreed, and they were married, and they stayed together. After two weeks he said to her, "My wife, I must continue my journey to Maskat now; but in the space of six months I will return and stay with you."

She said, "It is well, my husband; go, and return in safety."

So he got in his boat and set sail for Maskat. After he had gone she got in her boat and set sail behind him. In the middle of the sea her vessel passed his, and he called out, "Who is that who is passing me?"

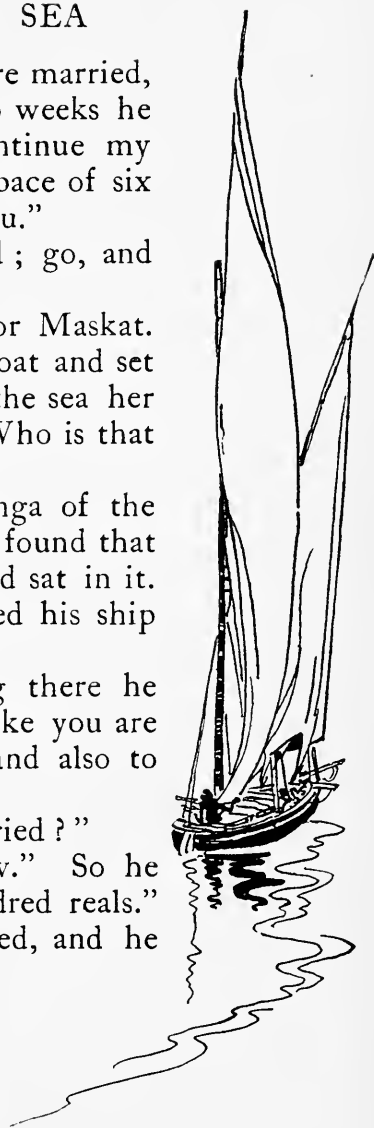
She replied, "It is I, Kitangatanga of the sea." She arrived first in Maskat and found that house where he stopped and went and sat in it. Presently her husband arrived, moored his ship and went up to the house.

When he saw that woman sitting there he was very surprised and said, "How like you are to my wife whom I left in Kilwa, and also to that woman I married in Zanzibar."

Then he asked her, "Are you married?"

She replied, "No, I am a widow." So he said, "I will marry you for one hundred reals."

She agreed, and they were married, and he



BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

stayed with her six months there in Maskat. At the end of that time he said, "My wife, I must now return home. I will stay a year, and then I will return to you."

She said, "Go, and return in peace, my husband."

So he set sail from Maskat, and that woman set sail after him. In the midst of the ocean she passed him again, and when he asked who it was, she replied, "It is I, Kitangatanga of the sea."

She arrived at Zanzibar and went up to that house.

Presently her husband arrived, and she said, "Welcome, stranger; what is the news?"

He replied, "The news is that I have made a prosperous journey to Maskat, and that there I met a woman just like the wife I left at Kilwa and also like you, and I married her."

She replied, "It is well, my husband."

After he had stopped several weeks he said to her, "My wife, I must now return home. I will stop one year, and then I will return to you."

So she said, "May your journey be prosperous, my husband, and may you return in safety."

KITANGATANGA OF THE SEA

So he set sail for Kilwa, and she set sail after him. In the midst of the ocean she passed him again, and when he asked who it was, she replied, "It is I, Kitangatanga of the sea."

When she arrived in Kilwa she moored her vessel and went up to her house. She entered by her underground doorway and sat down. After a while her husband arrived and climbed in by his window. She said, "Welcome, my husband."

Then she cooked food for him, and when he had eaten she asked him, "What is the news of there where you have been?"

He replied, "I made a good voyage to Zanzibar, and there I met a woman just like you. I married her for one hundred reals, and stayed with her for two weeks. Then I went on to Maskat, and there I met a woman exactly like you and like that woman I married in Zanzibar. I married her, too, for a hundred reals, and stopped with her six months.

"Then I returned to Zanzibar and stayed with my wife there a few weeks, then set out for home, and here I am. Now what is the news here of this place whilst I have been away?"

TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

That wife replied, "The news is this, my husband. I was angered because you put me in a hut without a door, so I made this underground door which you see there.

"Then, when you set sail, I set sail after you, and I passed you in the sea; and when you asked who I was, I replied, 'Kitangatanga of the sea!'

"I came first to Zanzibar, and it was I whom you married there for a hundred reals.

"When you left for Maskat, I set sail behind you, and arrived there first. It was I also whom you married in Maskat for one hundred reals. That is my news, my husband."

When her husband heard that, he said, "Indeed, this is true. Now I will build you a very fine hut with a door in it, so that you may go out when you please."

So he built her a splendid hut with a door and put her into it, and there they lived happily.



AFRICAN
"PIANO"
WITH
GOURD
RESONATOR



AFRICAN
LIZARD-
SKIN
DRUM



PLAYING
THE
"PIANO"



BEATING
THE TOM-TOM



SMALL
BOY
SINGING

IX

THE LION'S TALISMAN

THE talisman of the lion is like that of cattle ; it is a hairy pellet, and he carries it about with him in his mouth.

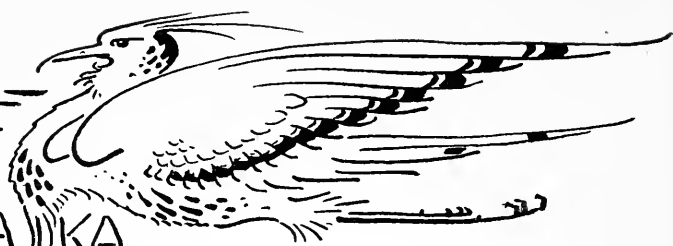
When he goes out to hunt he digs a hole in the ground and hides it there. Then he goes to hunt, and when he has finished hunting and eating meat till he is satisfied, he comes back to that place where he has hid his charm and digs it up and swallows it.

When he sees that he is about to die, he throws it far away, so that it may not be found at his death.

Should a man get it, he becomes possessed of great good fortune. If he wishes he can put it away and keep it, or if he desires he can sell it for much money, or he can make it into a charm and wear it himself. If a man wearing this charm meets with a lion, that lion is unable to do anything to him, by reason of that charm.



THE STORY OF KIBARAKA AND THE BIRD



X

ONCE upon a time there was a Sultan, and he had one son, a very handsome youth, called Hasani.

Every day at noon the Sultan and his son used to go to the mosque to pray. After they had gone the Sultan's wife used to sort out the seeds of every kind of grain in the Sultan's store. Those that needed drying she gave to a slave, called Kibaraka, to put out in the sun to dry.

One day, after the Sultan and his son had gone to prayer, she called to the slave, "Kibaraka, take these seeds and put them out in the sun." Kibaraka took the grain and spread it out to dry, each kind by itself.

STORY OF KIBARAKA AND THE BIRD

Suddenly a wondrously fine bird came and sat down by the grain and called out —

“Kibaraka ! Kibaraka !”

He answered, “ Here, lady, here.”

Then the bird sang. —

Bird. “ Shall I eat of this wheat ?
Or shall I not eat ?
Or shall I eat millet ? ”

Kibaraka. “ Eat, Lady, I will it.”

Bird. “ Shall I eat rape instead ?
Or must I not be fed ?
Shall I eat maize to-day ? ”

Kibaraka. “ Eat, Lady, eat, I pray.”

Bird. “ Shall I eat all the grain ?
Or must I now refrain ?
Shall I eat rice to-day ? ”

Kibaraka. “ Eat, Lady, eat, I pray.”

Bird. “ Where has your master gone to-day ? ”

Kibaraka. “ Gone to the mosque to read and pray.”

Bird. “ My greetings to the Sultan give
When he returns. Long may he live.”

At that it flew away.

On the next day and the day after the bird came again and sung the same song.

Till one day Kibaraka told his young master

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

Hasani, "Master, every day at one o'clock, when you are at the mosque, a lovely bird comes here."

Hasani asked, "What kind of bird is this?"

Kibaraka said, "All ordinary wonders are surpassed by this bird, for it sings a very beautiful song," and he told his master of the song.

At these words the Sultan's son perceived that this bird was of the daughters of the Jins, and he fell in love with her.

Then he said to Kibaraka, "See here, I have given you your freedom, you are no longer a slave, and now you must catch this bird for me."

After that Hasani was seized with a grievous illness because of his longing for that bird till, on the third day at one o'clock, the Sultan went out to look for all the wisest of the medicine men to attend to his son.

Whilst he was gone that bird came and sat by the grain and called, "Kibaraka! Kibaraka!"

Kibaraka cut a thin pole and made a noose at the end and set it near the bullrush millet, the grain the bird loved best.

When it had finished eating all the seeds it

STORY OF KIBARAKA AND THE BIRD

wished to fly away, but one of its wings caught in the noose.

Then it said to Kibaraka, "Please let me go and do not touch me, for you will injure me. Take this feather of mine and carry it to your master, and let it be my salaams to him."

So Kibaraka brought the feather to the Sultan's son. Hasani was very pleased. Then he said to him, "Kibaraka, my brother, why did not you catch the owner of this feather?"

Kibaraka said, "I was not able to catch it. When I saw it I fell down seven times because of its light, and my wisdom forsook me."

When the Sultan returned, his son said to him, "My father, you must sound the pallaver-horn, that all the people may come before the palace." The Sultan loved his son exceedingly, so he gathered all his people together. Then Hasani said, "Tell the people that they must look for this bird and bring it to me, and if they do not bring it I shall die." So the Sultan gave out the order, "There is no leave to weave or spin, to grind corn or pound grain, until this bird has been brought."

At once all the people of that country went

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

out into the jungles and deserts to look for that bird. Every one who found a fine bird would seize it and bring it to the Sultan's son, but to each he said, "This is not the one."

Till one day, as people were sitting in the Sultan's court holding a pallaver, just after one o'clock had struck, they looked up and saw a dust-cloud coming like rain.

Behold, it was that bird coming, and Kibaraka recognised its coming.

When it came it sat down by the grain and ate all the seeds till, as it came to the last, Kibaraka caught it and brought it to his master. When Hasani looked on that bird, behold, it was a beautiful woman.

He said, "Kibaraka, run quickly, go your way to the audience chamber and tell my father that he must fire the cannons, for the thing I desired has come to pass, and the request I made of Allah has been granted."

So Kibaraka came and told the Sultan, and the cannons were fired, and wedding festivities and feastings were held for nine years.

After that Hasani and the fair Jin had a child, a boy like pearls and precious stones.

STORY OF KIBARAKA AND THE BIRD

And Hasani loved his wife exceedingly, and the people of that country saw wonders come to pass, for the second son was like the stars and the moon.

The house of that Sultan was greatly blessed, and the story ends here.



AFRICAN
OKAPI.

XI

THE STORY OF THE FOOLS

ONCE upon a time there lived a man called Omari and his wife, and they had a very fine fat black ox. So fat was this ox that all the young men in the village wanted to eat it, but Omari would not part with it.

Till one day he went away on a journey; then they thought, "Now we will be able to get that ox and have a feast, for his wife is a great fool."

So twenty men set out and came to the house of that woman, Omari's wife, and they knocked on the door.

"Hodi !"

And she replied, "Come near."

So they went in and told that woman, "We have had a vision, and in that vision we saw that you were going to have a child, a beautiful boy, who will be rich and clever, and will marry the daughter of the Wazir."

Now when the woman heard this she was wondrously pleased, for she had no child.

THE STORY OF THE FOOLS

Then these men said, "There was, in our dream, the sacrifice of a black ox, before this came to pass."

So she said, "Take my ox and sacrifice him, that the vision may come true."

They replied, "Shall we kill him, though, while your husband is away?"

She said, "Take him, yes, take him, for my husband will be only too pleased when he knows for what purpose the ox has been slain; and he, too, desires a son."

So the youths took away the ox and killed it and feasted and made merry.

After three days the husband returned, and when he did not see his ox in its stall he asked his wife, "Where is the ox?"

She said to him, "It has been slaughtered."

"Why?"

She replied, "Men came who had dreamed a dream that we should have a beautiful male child of great good fortune, and as the sacrifice of a black ox was necessary to bring it true, I gave ours to them."

Omari then said to his wife, "You are a fool. Now I am going out to search for as great a

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

fool as you are. If I cannot find any one who is your equal in folly, I shall leave you ; you will cease to be my wife."

So Omari took his donkey and rode away till he came to the house of a certain rich man, and this house had a verandah beneath it. Omari got off his donkey, and as he stood there, a woman, one of the slaves of the household, passed in, and said to him, "Master, where do you come from?"

Omari replied, "I come from the next world."

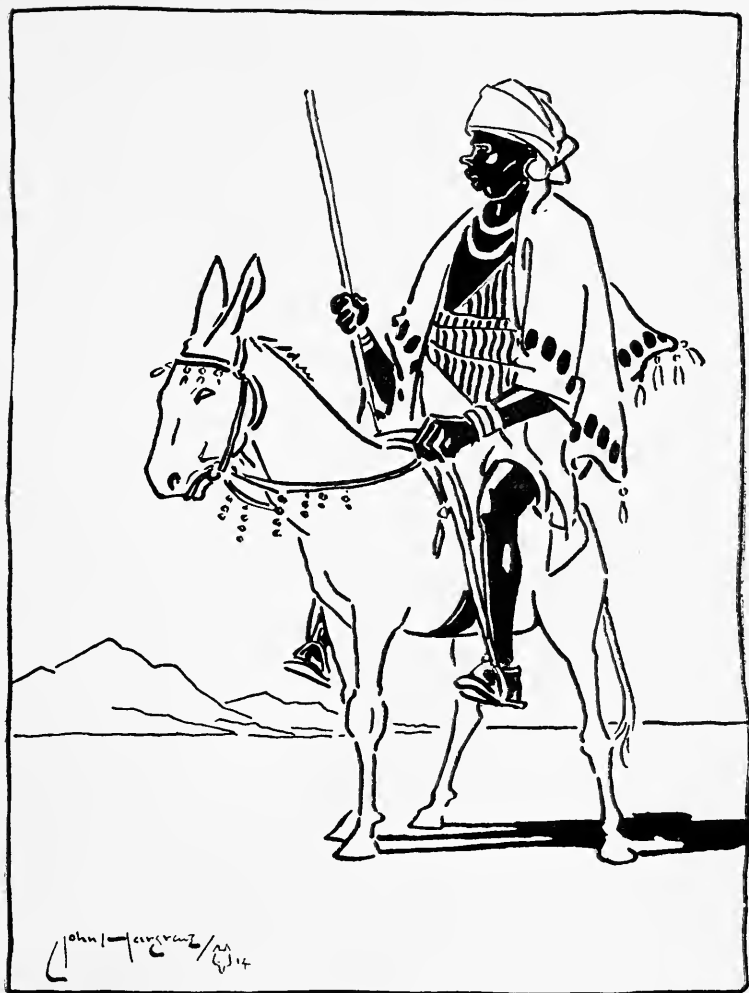
Then was that slave very astonished, and she went upstairs to her mistress and said to her, "There, below in the verandah, is a man who comes from the next world."

"Is that indeed so?" asked the mistress.

"It is indeed true, and if you doubt me ask him yourself, for he is there below," said the slave.

So the mistress sent her slave down to call Omari up into the house, and she came to him and said, "The mistress asks you to come upstairs."

Omari replied, "I cannot come upstairs ; I am afraid, because it is a stranger's house."



So Amari took his donkey and rode away.

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

When the slave brought these words to her mistress, she herself came down and called to Omari, "Do not be afraid ; come upstairs ; there is no danger."

So Omari went upstairs, and that woman asked him, "Master, where do you come from ?"

Omari replied, "I come from the next world."

"See," said the slave ; "were not my words true ?"

Then was that mistress very amazed, and she asked him, "Why have you left the next world ?"

"I have come to see my father," answered Omari.

"My father, who is dead," said the woman ; "have you met him there in the next world ?"

"What is he called, and what is he like?" said Omari.

"He is called so-and-so, son of so-and-so," said the woman, and she described to him his appearance.

Omari replied, "I have seen him."

"And how is he ?"

THE STORY OF THE FOOLS

At that Omari put on an air of grief and shook his head and sighed.

"Oh, tell me, what is the matter with my father?" asked the woman.

Omari replied, "He is in great trouble. He has no money or clothes or food. Oh, his state is very bad!"

When that woman heard these words she wept. Then she asked Omari, "When do you return to the next world?"

"I return to-morrow. First, I must see my father, who is still alive, and then I go back."

"Will you see my father when you return?"

"Most certainly," said Omari. "Do I not live next door to him?"

"Then," said that woman, "you must take him a present from me."

So she went into an inner room and took out a bag of a thousand dollars, and clothes, and a robe, and turbans, and came and gave them to Omari, and said, "Take these and give them to my father, and say that they are from his daughter, Binti Fatima."

Then she went in and brought out another bag and said, "Take these hundred dollars;

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

they are a present for you, as you are taking these things for my father."

So Omari gathered up the bags of money and the clothes and left that woman, and mounted his donkey and rode away.

He had only just left when the husband of that woman in the house returned home. He noticed that his wife was very joyful, so he asked her, "My wife, why are you so glad to-day?"

She said to him, "A man has just been here who has come from the next world, and he has met my father there in great trouble. So I have given him a thousand dollars and clothes to take to my father. That is why I am so happy; for now the spirit of my father will be very pleased with us, and it will bring us great good fortune."

Now that man saw that his wife had been fooled, but he feared to say so, in case his wife should tell him no more, and he wished to follow that man and get the money back.

So he said to her, "You are not a good wife, for when a man came from the next world to tell you about your father you gave him an

THE STORY OF THE FOOLS

offering to take back to him, but you never asked him about my father, or gave him anything to take to him."

Then the wife said, "Oh, forgive me, my husband, but as he has only just left you may overtake him. He was riding a donkey, and he left by that road."

Then she described him. So the husband called for his horse, and the wife ran in and brought out another bag of a thousand dollars, and as he mounted she gave it to him, saying, "Take this, my husband, and give it to him for your father, and if you gallop after him down that road you will surely overtake him."

Now Omari had ridden away on his donkey till he came to a plantation, then he turned his head and saw, in the distance, the dust made by a galloping horse. There was no one on that plantation except one male slave, and so Omari said to him, "Do you see that dust? It is made by a man of great violence. I am going to hide from him, and I advise you to climb up into a coco-nut tree, lest he do you some harm. If he speaks to you do not answer him, for it will only make him more angry."

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

So that slave scrambled up a coco-nut palm as fast as he could, whilst Omari hid himself and his donkey in a thicket close by.

Presently the husband of the woman galloped up, and saw the slave clambering up to the top of a tall coco-nut tree.

He stopped and called out, "Have you seen a man riding a donkey pass here?"

The slave did not answer, but continued climbing higher and higher. He asked him again and again, and the slave did not reply, but only made more haste to get well out of reach.

Then was that man very angry, and he got down from his horse and divested himself of all his robes, except only an under-garment, and placing them and the money on the ground, started climbing up after the slave.

Omari watched him from behind the thicket, and, when he had got well up the tree, he came out and seized that man's money and clothes, as well as those he already had, and then mounted his horse and galloped off.

When that man came down from the tree he found all his clothes and his money and his

THE STORY OF THE FOOLS

horse gone, and he was very ashamed. So he had to return home wearing only a loin-cloth.

When he came in his wife asked him, "My husband, why do you return naked like that?"

He was ashamed to tell her that he also had been fooled by that man, so he said, "I met the man from the next world, who told me that my father was in a very distressed condition, that he had no clothes, and was dressed in rags. So when I heard that, I took off all my clothes and gave them to that man to take to my father."

Now Omari took all that money, and the clothes, and the horse, and came back to his wife and told her, "I said that I would seek for a fool like unto yourself, and if I did not find one that you would cease to be my wife. Well, now I am content, for I have found two fools, each one more foolish than you."

So they lived together, Omari and his wife, and they spent the money and were happy together.

Here ends the story of the fools, the fool-wife, and the husband and wife who were fooled.



XII

A HYAENA went forth to drink water one day, and he came to a well and stooped down to quench his thirst. Now where he stooped down there was a moonbeam shining on the water.

The hyaena saw that moonshine there in the water and he thought it was a bone. He tried to reach it, but he could not, so he said to himself, "Now if I drink all this water I will get that bone which is at the bottom."

So he drank and drank, and the water was not finished. So he drank and drank again, till he was so full of water that he died.



THE SULTAN'S SNAKE- CHILD

XIII

ONCE upon a time there was a Sultan and his Wazir, and those two men were very rich with much wealth, but neither had a son.

They took counsel together, "How will it be when we die? Who shall we leave all this wealth to and we are without children?"

The Sultan said to the Wazir, "We must go to a far country and look for some wise man who will tell us what to do."

So they went away, and wandered on and on for three years, till at last they met an old woman, bent with the weight of many years.

That woman said to them, "My grandsons, I know what you have come for."

Then she sank down to the bottom of a big lake, and when she came up again out of the water she brought in her hands two charms,





At last they met an old woman, bent with the weight of many years.

THE SULTAN'S SNAKE-CHILD

which were two slimy roots ; one for the Sultan and one for the Wazir. And she said, "Take these, and when you return home you will find that your wish has already been accomplished ; but to these charms I give you there are conditions attached. When you arrive in your town, you must tell no man about it, and take heed that in the way you neither chirrup nor look back."

Then she shook her withered hand and said, "It has taken you three years to come ; you will return in one month. Farewell."

Then the Sultan and the Wazir set off home.

In the way the Wazir said, "Allah be praised that our wish has been granted." The Sultan, forgetting the old woman's warning, chirruped, as much as to say, "I will believe when I see."

After one month they came to the gate of their town, and as they entered the cannons sounded and the news spread forth, "There is an heir in the palace of the Sultan, and there is an heir in the house of the Wazir."

The Wazir returned to his house swiftly, and there he found a most beautiful boy.

The Sultan came to the palace, and there he found a snake.

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

When he heard that the Wazir had a lovely child he was very pleased, and he used to go every day to the Wazir's house to see that child, but he told his people to throw that snake out of the palace.

Now there was a slave girl in the palace called Mizi, and when she saw them taking that snake to throw it in the river she said, "Give me that snake, that I may bring him up as my child."

So Mizi took that snake and wore him round her neck till he grew, and then she came to the Sultan and said, "Build me a grass hut, that I may live there with my child, the snake."

So a hut was built for her, and she stayed there by herself with that snake. She took her cooking pots there, and cooked food for herself and the snake. Every day she fed that snake, and it grew and grew, till at last it filled up the whole hut.

Then that snake said to Mizi, "Go and tell the Sultan that his little snake wants a stone house of seven storeys in which to live. He must look for craftsmen who are not afraid, to come and build the house, and what they ask must be given them."

THE SULTAN'S SNAKE-CHILD

So Mizi came and told those words to the Sultan, and craftsmen who had no fear were sought for. They came and built a house of seven storeys in the space of seven days, and the wages they asked for were given them.

When the house was finished, they said, "Go and tell the little snake that the house is ready."

Then Mizi and the snake moved into that house and lived there. Till one day the snake said to Mizi, "Go and look for a sage who will teach me learning, but he must be master of his heart and unafraid. He must come of his own free will."

So she went and sought a man of learning, but every one she asked to come replied, "I am not going so as to be swallowed whole by that snake."

At last she found a sage who said, "I will go, for I see that Mizi lives with this snake and is not devoured, so why should I be eaten?"

So that professor came and taught the snake learning of every kind, and when he had finished he went to the Sultan and received the pay he asked for.

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

So the snake and Mizi lived together, till one day that snake said to her, "Now you must go and look for a wife for me ; but she must come of her own free will, and what money she wants she must have."

So a wife for the snake was sought for in all the land, but none was found ; all said, "Who wants to go and be swallowed whole by a big snake ?"

Now in that country was a very poor man who had seven daughters. When the news came to them all refused, till the seventh and youngest was asked, and she replied, "We are very poor ; I will go and be eaten by that snake. What matter ?"

So that girl was taken and decked out with pearls and precious stones and clothes of silk, and then Mizi was called and told, "This is the wife of your master, the snake. Take her."

So Mizi took her and brought her to the snake, and he said, "Arrange everything for her comfort."

When night had come, Mizi slept with that girl till, when twelve o'clock came, that snake came out from inside his skin. He put on

THE SULTAN'S SNAKE-CHILD

wooden sandals and went to the bathroom and made his ablutions. When he had finished washing he took his prayer mat and spread it out and prayed and read the Koran.

After that he came and sat near that girl and looked at her and said, "My wife is beautiful; she has beautiful eyes, lovely ears and long straight hair. Hhum! Poor me, who am a snake. Sleep, my beautiful wife."

Then he entered his skin again and slept.

Seven days passed in this way, and on the eighth Mizi said to that girl, "I will fasten a thread to your thumb; when I pull it open your eyes and look at him."

That night, at twelve o'clock, the snake came out of his skin, and then Mizi pulled the thread and that girl awoke and opened her eyes and saw a wondrously handsome Arab youth: in all that country there was no youth so handsome as that son of the Sultan.

The snake went to the bathroom and made his ablutions, and then returned and prayed and read the Koran.

At the time of the before dawn breezes he came and looked at his wife and then returned

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

to his skin. When dawn came Mizi and that girl took counsel together, and then Mizi went to the Sultan and said to him, "Give me three tins of oil and ten maunds of firewood."

When she had got them she had them brought to the house.

Then she said to that girl, "Now we must dig a pit here in the other room."

So they dug a pit and put in it the firewood and then poured the oil over it.

That night they watched till after midnight. When the youth went to the bathroom they got up and seized on the skin and tried to drag it into the pit, but it was too heavy for them. So they exerted all their strength, till at last they managed to drag it into the pit. After that they set fire to the wood and the oil.

When its owner in the bathroom heard the skin crackling he ran in and said to Mizi, "What have you done, taking away my clothes to put in the fire?" Then he fell down, and did not regain consciousness till three o'clock next day, for that youth did not know the world outside of his skin.

When he recovered Mizi cooked porridge for

THE SULTAN'S SNAKE-CHILD

him, and when he had eaten it he said to Mizi, "Go to the Sultan and tell him to make offerings, nine shells full of alms ; for the day after to-morrow I will go out."

So Mizi went with the news to the Sultan, but he replied, "Go back and get eaten by that snake. We do not want any more of your folly ; for you have taken the poor man's daughter and brought her to the snake, and she has already been swallowed up. Now you in your turn will be eaten, and to-day, I suppose, you have come to take leave of us."

Mizi returned and said to that youth, "He will not give the offering."

He replied, "Then leave him ; he who has had no luck does not trust to luck. On Friday I will come forth by the power of Allah, alone."

When Friday came he decked his horse with pearls and precious stones and rode off to the mosque to pray amongst all the people ; but the Sultan did not know that it was his son.

Then Mizi came forth and trilled and shouted for joy, and told every one in the mosque : "Look at me to-day, for it is to-day that my son, the snake, has come to life."

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

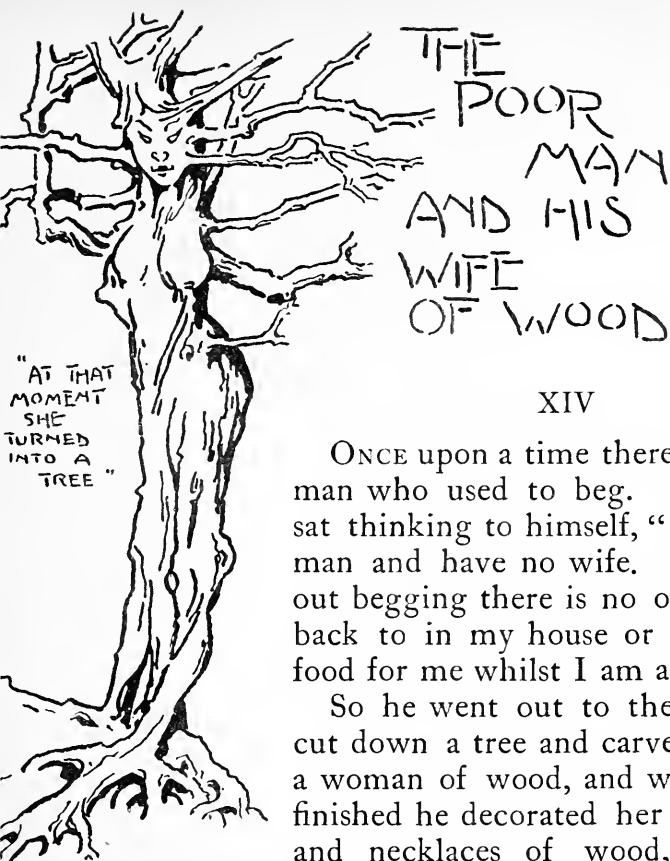
Many people thought that Mizi had gone mad. When the Sultan had finished praying he came forth, and Mizi said to him, "To-day my child has come forth."

The Sultan said, "Peace be upon you ;" and he followed that youth on his horse and knew that it was his son, and rejoiced greatly.

He said to his slaves, "Run to the palace, spread out diamonds and cushions, carpets and mats ; do not leave anything of any value, but spread everything out."

Then was the wedding of that girl, the poor man's daughter, and the snake held with great festivity. So that snake and Mizi lived happily, and he loved her as if she had been his own mother. When he became Sultan he gave the kingdom to her, he gave Mizi what spoke and what did not speak ; it became her country, because she had nurtured that snake from its infancy until it became a full-grown man of wisdom.

Now this story comes from the Sultan and his Wazir.



THE POOR MAN AND HIS WIFE OF WOOD

XIV

ONCE upon a time there was a poor man who used to beg. One day he sat thinking to himself, "I am a poor man and have no wife. When I go out begging there is no one to come back to in my house or to cook my food for me whilst I am away."

So he went out to the forest and cut down a tree and carved out of it a woman of wood, and when he had finished he decorated her with jewels and necklaces of wood, and then brought her back to his house.

Then that tree turned into a woman, and he called her Mwanamizi, the child of a root, and he lived with her many days. Till one day, when that poor man had gone forth to beg, a slave girl ran out from the palace of the Sultan in search of a brand with which to light the fire.

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

She came and knocked at the poor man's door, and when she got no answer she entered and went into the kitchen, and there she saw a lovely woman decked out with pearls and jewels. She went running back to the Sultan and said to him, "I have just seen the most wondrously beautiful woman in the house of that beggar who lives near us."

The Sultan then ordered his soldiers, "Go to fetch the wife of the beggar, that I may see if the words of this slave are true or false."

So they went and took Mwanamizi and brought her to the palace. When the Sultan saw her he thought her very beautiful.

So he said, "This woman is too beautiful for a beggar. I will take her for my wife."

Now when that poor man returned from begging he could not find his wife; then the neighbours told him, "The woman has been taken by the Sultan to his palace."

So he threw down his bag and went round to the palace, and rushed in before the Sultan and asked him, "Where is my wife whom you have taken?"

The Sultan replied, "Get out of my sight, you foolish fellow, or I will order my soldiers to beat you."

POOR MAN AND HIS WIFE

Then he said, "If you will not give me back my wife, take off my ornaments which she is wearing and return them to me, that I may go."

At that the Sultan called his soldiers and had him turned out of the palace.

After that the poor man went under the Sultan's window and sang—

"Oh listen, master, unto me :
My wife I carved from yonder tree ;
I carved her well, with zeal untold,
And decked her out with fetters gold.
These ornaments and jewels fine,
Oh, give them back, for they are mine ;
And, Mwanamizi, let me go."

When the woman heard the poor man's song she was bathed in tears.

The Sultan then said to her, "Take off those silly ornaments and throw them to him, that he may go away. I will give you things tenfold more fine and rare."

The woman did not want to take off those things.

The poor man sang again—

"Oh listen, master, unto me :
I carved my wife from yonder tree."

Then the woman took off her ornaments and threw them down to him, saying—

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

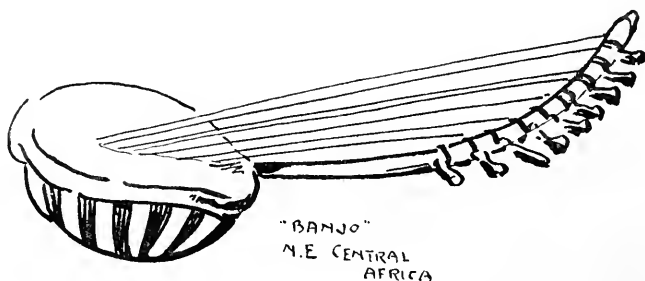
"The ornaments are thine,
The golden fetters fine ;
Take them, oh, take them,
Makami, and go."

She cried then very much, and took off all her things, till there was left a single charm round her neck.

The Sultan said, "Take off all his ornaments quickly and throw them to him, that he may go." But Mwanamizi did not want to take off that charm, for it was her soul. Then the poor man sang again, and Mwanamizi unfastened the charm from her neck and threw it to him, and at that moment she turned into a tree there in the house of the Sultan.

The poor man sighed and went back to his house, but the Sultan in his palace was seized with great fear.

The telling of the story ends here.





XV

ONCE upon a time there was a Sultan and his Wazir, and that Sultan had seven children, all sons, and that Wazir had seven children, all daughters.

Those daughters of the Wazir had no mother; their mother had died, and they were very poor.

The sons of the Sultan used to laugh at the daughters of the Wazir, saying, "You poor people, what do you eat? It is our father who

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

pays your father his wages, and how do they suffice for you seven people who are in one house? You poor creatures, you have not even a brother to help you."

Now those girls use to plait baskets and sell them. They lived for many days like that, their work being to cry every day, and when they came out of school they used to plait and sell their baskets. Till one day the youngest daughter, who was called Binti Ali, was sitting with her father, and she said to him, "What advice have you to give us, father?"

Her father asked her, "Why, my child?"

She said to him, "We are only seven girls; we have neither husbands nor brothers. Should anything happen to you, who will be our head-man? Father, you must arrange to have a ship built for me, and it must be ready in the space of three years."

Her father said, "All this wealth, where shall I get it from, that I may build a ship?"

She answered him, "God, the merciful, will provide."

In the morning the Wazir arose and went to the Sultan and said to him, "Give me help,

BINTI ALI THE CLEVER

for my youngest child wants a vessel built for her."

The Sultan brought out nine lakhs of rupees and gave them to his Wazir. Then the Wazir sought for workmen, and told them to build a ship and have it ready in three years' time.

Now that child, Binti Ali, was very beautiful, more beautiful than all her sisters. Many men had come to seek her in marriage, but she had refused them, saying, "I am poor; my father has not wealth to suffice for my wedding."

At the end of three years the ship was ready, and her father called her, "Eh, my child, Binti Ali." And she answered him, "Lebeka, father," which means "Here I am" in the language of to-day; but long, long ago, Lebek was the name of the god worshipped by the Phœnicians at the temple of Baal-lebek (Bal bek).

Her father said to her, "Your ship is finished and ready for you."

So she went to see it, and found that it was built in a wondrously fine way. When she returned she said to her father, "Now you must find me a captain and sailors, and you must put on the vessel enough food to last three years."

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

So he found a crew for her, and provisioned the ship and returned. Then she said, "Father, now you must buy for me fine raiment, a sultan's turban, a shirt and coat, and a sword and dagger. Also you must get for me sandals of gold braid and two men's gold rings."

So her father searched for one hour and half a second, and then returned and said, "My child, the things you want are ready."

Then he asked her, "My child, where are you going to? Tell me."

She said, "Father, have you no understanding? I am going to the country of the Sultan Makami."

Her father said to her, "My child, you are already lost. Do you not know that a woman may not go to the country of Sultan Makami? Any other than a male who enters the country is put to death."

Binti Ali said to him, "Father, have you no wits, you, a full-grown man, who rule all this land? Do you not see that all these clothes which you have bought for me are men's clothes? I want to go and see Makami's country."

BINTI ALI THE CLEVER

Her father said, "I do not approve of this journey you are setting out upon."

His daughter replied, "What becomes of me is in the hands of God."

Then she entered the bathroom and washed herself, and when she came out she was dressed as a man. Now that girl had wisdom more than all her sisters, and she was well read in the Koran.

She took her dog, whose name was Atakalo, and she entered the ship and set sail.

She travelled day and night for three years, and there in the midst of the ocean she taught her dog till it attained great learning.

At the end of the third year she drew near to the country of Sultan Makami, and she ordered a salute to be fired, and the people on land replied also with a salute.

When her vessel drew near, the Sultan's son rowed out to meet her. He climbed on board, and there he saw a handsome Arab youth sitting on the deck.

Binti Ali arose, and they greeted one another after the fashion of men : "Peace be with you," "And with you peace."

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

She went ashore with that son of the Sultan, and they came to the palace.

When they came to the palace he said to his father, the Sultan, "How shall we see that this is a man and not a woman? Let us give him very hot gruel, and if it is a woman she will not be able to drink it, and then we will kill her."

So they ordered food to be brought, and slaves were told: "Take matting and platters, and very big trays and cups of gold, and place them ready for the feast."

When the food was ready they brought gruel for that foreign youth to drink, and it was very hot.

Binti Ali took it and threw it away, saying, "Am I a woman, that you bring me cold gruel like that?"

So they prepared fresh gruel, steaming hot, and gave it to her, and she said, "Ah, that is more fit for a Sultan's son to drink."

So she put it beside her, and her dog Atakalo blew on it, so that it quickly cooled, and she drank it.

Very good food was then brought, and they fed, and she returned to her ship.

BINTI ALI THE CLEVER

The Sultan then said, "To-morrow we must take this foreigner to my store of jewels and ornaments, and if it be a woman we will surely see, for she will take delight in women's jewellery."

All night long Binti Ali taught Atakalo what he should do, and in the morning the Sultan's son came to fetch her.

He said, "My father says that I am to take you to his store and show you his treasures."

So they went to the Sultan's treasure-house, where they showed her neck chains and nose pendants, anklets and bracelets, women's gold rings and ear ornaments.

She said, "Have you in this country no men's ornaments, that you should show me nothing but women's jewellery?"

So they brought her to the next store, wherein were gold-hilted daggers and all manner of arms, swords and pistols, guns and muskets. These she admired, and meanwhile Atakalo went and swallowed all the gold ornaments he could find and took them to the ship, till he had brought much wealth aboard.

Then the Sultan's son said to his father,

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

“Now what shall we do, so that we may kill her if she is a woman?”

So the Sultan said, “Make him take off his turban, and then we will surely see by the manner in which he ties it whether it is a woman or not.”

So the Sultan’s son said, “Now will you not wash?”

Binti Ali said, “Thank you, I have already bathed on board.”

So he said, “If it is only your face, I beseech you to wash.”

So she said, “Certainly; but first you and your father must wash.”

So they took off their turbans and began to wash, when suddenly there was a shout from outside: “The Sultan’s house is on fire.”

Behold, that dog Atakalo had brought a brand and set fire to the palace. Then the Sultan and his son and all the people in his house rushed out, with their turbans in their hands, to see what was the matter and help put out the flames.

Binti Ali went down swiftly to her ship and got on board, and meanwhile Atakalo had run round and bored a hole in the bottom of every boat and ship in the Sultan’s harbour. Then

BINTI ALI THE CLEVER

Atakalo came back to her vessel and said,
"Mistress, I have finished."

So she weighed anchor and changed into her



woman's clothes. The Sultan and his son and
all the people, when they saw that she was sailing
off, rushed down to the beach and tried to row

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

out and stop her, but every boat they launched sunk ; and so they were not able to get to her.

Then they saw her come up on the deck.

Then, changing her clothes as a woman, she sings—

“ Makami, behold my bracelets and rings.
See my anklets, Makami. Aha, behold !
See the chain for my neck of beautiful gold.
Behold now my ear-rings and nose-stud see.
Lola, Makami, lola, look well at me.
I'm Binti Ali, the Wazir's daughter ;
I came, Makami, from over the water.
We are seven in all, the last born am I.
Farewell, Makami, for I bid you good-bye.
Lola, Makami, lola, farewell.”

Then she said to the captain, “ Set sail, and let us return home.”

When she arrived home there in her town her father and sisters were holding a great mourning for her, for they said, “ Our youngest one has now been away many years ; surely she must be dead.”

When they saw her their hearts were very glad, and a feast was made for her for the space of three days. And the riches she brought with her, which her dog Atakalo had taken from the

BINTI ALI THE CLEVER

Sultan's treasure house, were brought to land ; and when he saw them her father rejoiced greatly.

After a space of ten days she said to her father, " I know that Sultan Makami's son is making a plan to get me. If he comes here and asks for me in marriage, do not refuse him, but agree. My cleverness, which I have in my heart, is that which will save me."

One day the Sultan of Makami's son arrived, and came to the Wazir and said, " I want your daughter, Binti Ali, in marriage."

So the Wazir agreed.

Binti Ali took a large pumpkin and filled it with honey and placed it on her bed, and she herself got under the bed.

That night the Sultan of Makami's son came into her room and said, " Ee, woman," and she replied, " Lebeka, master."

Then he said, " You, woman, you think that you can come to our country and cheat us, pretending that you are a man. Behold, to-day is your last, so make profession of faith quickly, so that you may be prepared for death."

Binti Ali said, " I testify there is no God but

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

one God, and Muhammad is the prophet of God."

So he drew his sword and struck a blow which cut the pumpkin in two, and then he went out quickly and got on his ship and sailed away. When he came to look at his sword, to wipe the blood off, he found no blood, but only honey stuck all over it.

This is the end of the story. The tale comes from the Wazir and his daughter, the last born, who was called Binti Ali the Clever.



XVI

SEGU THE HONEY-GUIDE

SEGU is the honey-guide. His work is that he lives in the forest and flies about looking for bees' nests, and when he finds one he goes to look for men. When he finds them he says, "Che ! che ! che ! che !" until those sons of men look up and say, "Ah, there is Segu. Let us go with him that he may show us honey."

So these people follow Segu, who flies in front from tree to tree saying, "Che ! che ! che ! che !"

When he comes to that tree where the honey is he flies round, saying, "Che ! che ! che ! che !" very fast, and then he goes and sits by himself.

Then these men come to the tree and look up and see where the bees' nest is ; so they climb up with their axe and cut a hole and get out the honey.

They take that honey and are very pleased, but a little of it they leave for Segu as his share.

On these people going away, Segu comes out and finds the honey which they have left him ; so

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

he sits and eats and fills himself, and arises and flies away. This is, indeed, Segu's manner of living.

Another day Segu sees a lion asleep, and he looks for people, and when he finds them he twitters and says, "Che ! che ! che ! che !"

Then these people follow him thinking, "To-day Segu is going to show us much honey."

They follow him up there to where the lion is lying, and when they suddenly see him they are unable to stand, if there is running away to be done instead.

The lion frightens these people, so they run swiftly away, saying, "To-day Segu has done evil; every day he shows us honey, and to-day he comes to show us a lion."

That is all.



XVII

THERE were once upon a time two poor children, one was called Lila and one was called Fila, and they were great friends.

Fila said one day to Lila, "Our mothers are poor ; what can we do for a living, my friend ? We have no money with which to repay them for the kindness they have shown towards us. We have now become full-grown lads, and have

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

not yet earned any money to give them. I propose that we set out on a journey and see what we can find."

Lila agreed to the words of his friend, and so each one went to his mother and said to her, "Mother, make me seven ladu-cakes, for I am going on a journey to a very far country."

And each mother replied, "Where are you going, my beloved child?"

Lila's mother said to him, "Do not go with Fila."

Lila answered, "I am not able to leave my friend Fila for half a second."

His mother said, "It is he that will leave you, and it is you that will be lost."

He replied, "If a man is lost for the sake of his friend it is well."

So they had each one seven ladu-cakes made for him, and each one took a gourd of water, and on the next day they set out.

After they had gone a day's journey Fila said to Lila, "Bring out one of your ladus, that we may break and eat it. We will eat yours first, and when they are finished then will we eat mine."

LILA AND FILA

So they ate one of Lila's ladus. On the second day they did likewise, and on the next and the next day, until, on the seventh day, all Lila's ladus were finished.

On the eighth day Lila said to Fila, "Bring out one of your ladus, my friend, that we may break and eat it, for all mine are now finished, and hunger is hurting me."

Fila replied, "You must give me that Kanzu shirt of yours first, and then I will give you a share of my ladu."

So Lila took off his Kanzu and gave it to Fila, and then Fila broke off a bit from one of his ladus and gave it to him.

On the next day Lila said, "My friend, I am hungry; bring out the second of your ladus, that we may eat it."

Fila replied, "To-day if I am to give you some of my ladu you must give me your vest."

So Lila took off his vest and gave it to Fila, and received a piece of ladu for it.

On the next and the next day it was the same, till, on the twelfth day, Fila had taken away all Lila's clothes.

On the thirteenth day, when Lila asked for

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

some ladu, Fila said, "You must let me put out one of your eyes if you are to have any ladu to-day."

Lila replied, "I cannot refuse, for I am very hungry."

So Fila put out one of his friend's eyes, and Lila said nothing ; he put all his misfortunes in the hand of God.

On the fourteenth day Lila said to Fila, "My friend, have you not treated me evilly? Have you not done wrong? I left my mother to follow you, my friend, and you have deceived me. You have eaten my ladus till they were finished, and now you have taken all my clothes and put out my eye. Will you not to-day give me a piece of your ladu?"

Fila said, "Yes, I will give you a piece of ladu if you agree to me putting out your other eye."

Lila said to him, "Go on, put out my other eye."

So Fila put out his other eye, and then he sat him down under a tree and put his gourd of water and a piece of ladu beside him and went his way, leaving his friend blind and naked in the road.

Lila sat there awhile, and then he ate his piece

LILA AND FILA

of ladu, drank his water, gave praise to God and then slept.

When it was midnight two birds came and perched on the tree, one on one side and one on the other.

The first said, "Eh, my friend, I have a song which I will sing."

The other asked, "What song will you sing?"

Then the first bird looked down and said, "Look, there is a human asleep underneath."

The other said, "Oh, that son of Adam is lying just where those jars of money are buried; just opposite him is the tree whose roots are medicine for mad people, and he is leaning against the eye medicine tree."

Then they flew away; but Lila heard these words, and he groped and took some of the bark of that tree and rubbed it on his eyes, and behold, he could see; both his eyes were whole.

Then he went to the other tree and dug up some of the roots, and after that he dug down where he had been lying and found jars of money. He took a little money, and the rest he covered up and left.

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

Next day he took the road and journeyed on, and that day he arrived at a town, and there he heard the news that the daughter of the Sultan had been seized with madness.

He was told, "No one is allowed to come to this country unless he knows how to make medicine for the Sultan's daughter. This is now the seventh year since she became mad, and the Sultan has made a vow that he who cures her will marry her, and he who does not cure her will be killed."

So Lila entered that town, and he was at once taken before the Sultan, who asked him, "Can you cure my child?"

He replied, "Master, I do not know medicines, but I will try."

So he was taken in to the Sultan's daughter through seven doors, and he saw her where she had been put. She was fastened with chains on hands and feet.

He gave her of that medicine, and immediately she became cured.

Then the Sultan ordered a feast to be prepared, and he married Lila to his daughter. He himself descended from the throne and put Lila

LILA AND FILA

in his place. So Lila became the Sultan of that town.

One day, as he looked out of the palace window, he saw a man passing, and when he came near he recognised that it was his friend Fila.

He told his soldiers to fetch him and bring him before him.

When Fila was brought he said to him, "My friend, do you not recognise me?"

Fila replied, "I do not know you."

Then Lila said, "Is it not I whose eyes you put out?"

Then Fila was very afraid, and said, "Then it is you who will now put out mine."

Lila ordered his soldiers, "Take him out, put out his eyes and leave him in the way."

So they took him out and did as they were bid. After three days they went to look for him and found that he had died.

Lila and Fila, it was not possible for them to mix together, and even to-day, if there are two people who cannot agree, or two things which cannot go together, it is said of them: "They are like Lila and Fila."



XVIII

LONG ago there lived some hunters who one day took their bows and arrows and went with their dogs to hunt in the forest.

And those hunters walked very far, looking for game, and they caught some animals, and then a very heavy rain fell upon them. So they looked for a place in which they could sit and take shelter until the rain was over, and they found a very big tree with a large hollow in it. Then those hunters and their dogs entered into that tree and sat down. Now that hole in the tree belonged to a large snake, and that snake had gone out to look for game.

The snake hunted and did not find any game,

STORY OF HUNTERS AND SNAKE

so it returned home hungry and annoyed. When it got near its hole it heard the voices of men talking in its house.

That snake was very surprised, and said to itself, "Who can it be talking in my house?" Then it said in a loud voice, "Who speaks there in my house?"

Those men inside were astonished, and asked one another, "Who can that be talking outside?"

Before they could answer, or look outside, the snake itself arrived at the entrance and blocked the way out. Then it said, "What sort of people are you to come and sit in my house? This is my house in which I sit by myself. Answer me quickly what you mean by going into it?"

Those men answered, "Please, sir, we have come from our village looking for game. We went very far and only caught some small animals, and then it rained very hard, so we came in here to escape the rain. We did not know that it was your house. Now we have nothing to say; we only ask your leave to go out. If you say 'go out' we will go our way at once."

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

The snake said, "You have no leave to go out."

Then those men asked, "Then what do you wish us to do?"

The snake said, "What you must do is that you must at once give that game you have caught to your dogs to eat, that they may get fat. Then you must eat your dogs, so that you become very fat, and then I will eat you."

Those men said, "We are not able to eat dogflesh, master. If this is indeed your house, perhaps you will eat us. No matter, it is the will of Allah."

Whilst they were talking thus to that big snake an elephant-nosed shrew came out of the bush and heard them talking, and came near to the door of the snake's house.

Then he asked, "What does this snake say?"

Those men said, "This snake is standing in the doorway and preventing us from going out, and he tells us we must give our game to our dogs, and then eat our dogs, that he may eat us. This is because we came to sit in here to escape from the rain."

The elephant-nosed shrew said, "Agree to

STORY OF HUNTERS AND SNAKE

what he says. When that snake has eaten you and become very fat I will eat him."

When that snake heard those words of the shrew it was very angry, and chased the shrew, and the shrew ran off into the bush, and the snake followed him very far, but did not catch him.

Then those hunters were able to come forth from that hole and escape. So they went out very quickly and ran back to their village.

When the snake came back to his house he found that those men had run away. It was indeed the elephant-nosed shrew who had saved them.



ALL OF THE CROOKED ARM



XIX

LONG ago in olden days there was a country, and the Sultan of that country had seven wives and the Wazir also had seven wives.

And the seven wives of the Sultan had seven children, and the seven wives of the Wazir had seven children, all boys.

The seventh child of the Sultan had only one eye, but the seventh child of the Wazir was wondrously beautiful. They called him Ali ; but oh, misfortune, one arm was crooked.

Now all these fourteen children were brought

ALI OF THE CROOKED ARM

up together till, by the power of Allah, they grew up into youths.

That seventh child of the Sultan, his companion was always Ali, the seventh child of the Wazir.

So those children grew up, and they were sent to school until they finished learning.

The Wazir's seventh child said to his father, "Buy me a white horse;" and the Sultan's seventh son said to his father, "Buy me a white horse."

So each one had a white horse given him with fine trappings.

Then one day the crier was sent forth to beat his horn and proclaim, "On Friday there is a meeting at the Sultan's. Every one must bring his horse. There will be racing between the Sultan's son and the Wazir's son."

So people came with their horses, and the Wazir's son said, "I will go first," and the Sultan's son said, "I will go first," till grown-up men said, "Do not contend one against another like that."

So the Sultan's son went first, and the Wazir's son followed behind him. Then all who were

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

present followed, every man on his horse, but the horses of the Wazir's son and the Sultan's son leaped and soared like kites, higher and higher.

At half-past six o'clock they all returned safely.

Next day Ali said to the Sultan's son, "Let us first go to the plantation, and remain in the garden till four o'clock, and then let us both go and play on horseback."

So they went into the garden at noon and gathered pomegranates and ate.

The Sultan's son said, "Let each one of us pluck a pomegranate and put it in his pocket."

So they each picked a pomegranate, but behold, in that one which Ali took was living the Jin of Jehan, who carries off children from year to year.

After this they returned to the palace and found their horses already saddled.

They mounted, and the Wazir's son struck his horse with his whip, and it soared over the clouds like a kite. And the Sultan's son followed his companion, his horse leaping. He saw his friend soaring and flying away in front till, as six o'clock struck, he saw him no more, so he returned weeping and in great distress.

ALI OF THE CROOKED ARM

Ali flew away on his horse till he found himself in the Jin's house, and he lifted up his voice and cried, "Alas, I am already lost."

That Jin sought a house, and told Ali, "Put your horse in here and fasten it apart."

On the second day he said to him, "Ali, do you see this big cooking-pot? Your work will be to keep up the fire under it."

On the third day the Jin gave into his hands all the keys of his house, seven in all, and he said to him, "You may open this one room, but these other six you may not open."

The demon then set out to go and walk about, saying to Ali as he left, "To-day I am going out to walk, and to-morrow I will return. You are to look after this pot, but you must not lift the lid to see what is in it."

When the demon had gone Ali lifted up the lid to see what was in the pot, and he saw human flesh stewing.

Then Ali said to himself, "Ah! My father, the demon, eats human flesh." Then he thought, "I, too, will be eaten. Whatever God wishes is best." As he thought he played with a knife in his hand and cut his finger.



The Jin.

ALI OF THE CROOKED ARM

In the evening the old demon returned and called out, "Hi, Ali!" and he answered him, "Here, father."

When he came to him the demon said, "Oh dog, what have you done to your finger?"

Ali said, "Father, why are you angry and speaking fiercely to me? I am afraid."

So the Jin said to him, "Come now, undo your finger that I may see." Then he touched it and healed it up.

They slept that night, and in the morning the Jin said to him, "Ali, I am going out to walk about for the space of fourteen days, and then I will return."

Ali said to him, "Very good, father."

When the Jin had gone Ali sat and thought out different plans, and he said to himself, "My father, the demon, said that I must not open all the rooms, but to-day I will open them and see what is in them."

So he went and opened the first room, and saw an enormous horse, most wondrously beautiful.

When the horse saw Ali he neighed, and said to him, "What plan have you? Father said good-bye to you like that, saying that he would

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

return on the fourteenth day, to deceive you. He will come back to eat you on the eighth day."

Then he said, "Go and open all the rooms, and then return here that I may advise you."

Ali went and opened the second room, and saw seven maidens, sitting each one in a box and reading a Koran. Their hair was long and very beautiful.

Ali asked them, "How now?"

Those maidens answered him, "We have been put here so that we may be eaten together with you. We have been lost to our parents many years."

He locked that room and went and opened the third. There he found swords with jewelled hilts fighting in the air by themselves, and he was very astonished.

Ali locked up the third room again, and now there were three rooms he had not yet opened.

He opened the fourth room, and found it filled from top to bottom with precious stones. Then he opened the fifth room, and found it full of grain; this was the horse's food.

He then went and unlocked the sixth room,

ALI OF THE CROOKED ARM

and there he found the horse's saddle and bridle, adorned with jewels, and he found seven bottles ; the first was full of sun, the second of rain, the third of needles, the fourth of hail, the fifth of thorns, the sixth of mud, and the seventh of sea.

Then he returned to the horse's room, and when he saw Ali he neighed and shook his head.

The horse said to Ali, " We who are in this house are as if we were already dead ; we will all be eaten alike."

Then he said, " Open the wheat store quickly, that I may eat, for the time is nearly spent when that evil-disposed Jin will return."

Ali went and brought a sack of grain and opened it, and the horse ate and said, " Bring me a second sack, for I am not yet satisfied."

He brought a second, and the horse ate and finished it, and said, " Bring a third, for I am not yet full."

So he ate a third sack, and then he said, " Bring a bucket of water, stir it up with sugar, for that is the kind of water that I drink, and mix me up another bucket with bhang."

Then he said, " Now I am satisfied. Bring my saddle and the seven bottles, and take bags and

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

fill them with precious stones and fasten them on quickly, that we may go."

So Ali put all the valuables in the house in bags, and he took those seven maidens and placed them in bags, and he saddled the horse and fastened those bags on to him.

Then the horse said, "Strap me up tight and with all your strength."

So Ali strapped him up as tight as he could, till the horse said, "Stop now ; mount me for a little to try me."

So Ali mounted and smacked him, and he soared up over the clouds. Then he returned and said, "Now bring out another sack of grain, that I may eat and be satisfied."

So he gave him another sack, and then he said, "Now fasten another sack of grain on to me, lest I grow hungry in the way."

So Ali fastened on a sack of grain, and then the horse said, "Take a crow-bar and dig there in the floor of the house."

So Ali dug there and found more precious stones, and he put them in bags, and brought them and fastened them to the saddle.

Then the horse said, "Come on, Ali, mount

ALI OF THE CROOKED ARM

me. We are going now, and this advice I give you before we go. In the way we will meet with great strife, so listen well, and do as I tell you."

Then Ali mounted and smacked him, and the horse soared up over the clouds, higher and higher.

When they had gone a little way they met the Jin and a host of his fellow demons, whom he had brought to feast on those eight people in his house. One was taking an axe to chop up the meat, others carried firewood and pots and water with which to cook the flesh.

When those demons saw them they called out, "Look, there is the flesh going off."

The horse said to Ali, "Take the bottle of sun and break it." So Ali broke it, and the sun shone on the demons and scorched them.

But they pursued them, crying, "Our meat is going away, our meat is going away."

They ran after them, and as they came near the horse said, "Break the bottle of rain." So Ali broke the bottle and rain poured on them, but still they pursued.

Ali looked round and said, "They are

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

coming." So the horse said, "Break the bottle of needles."

Ali broke the bottle, and many got needles in their feet and could not run quickly, but many escaped and came on swiftly, crying, "Hi there ! Hi there ! our meat is escaping."

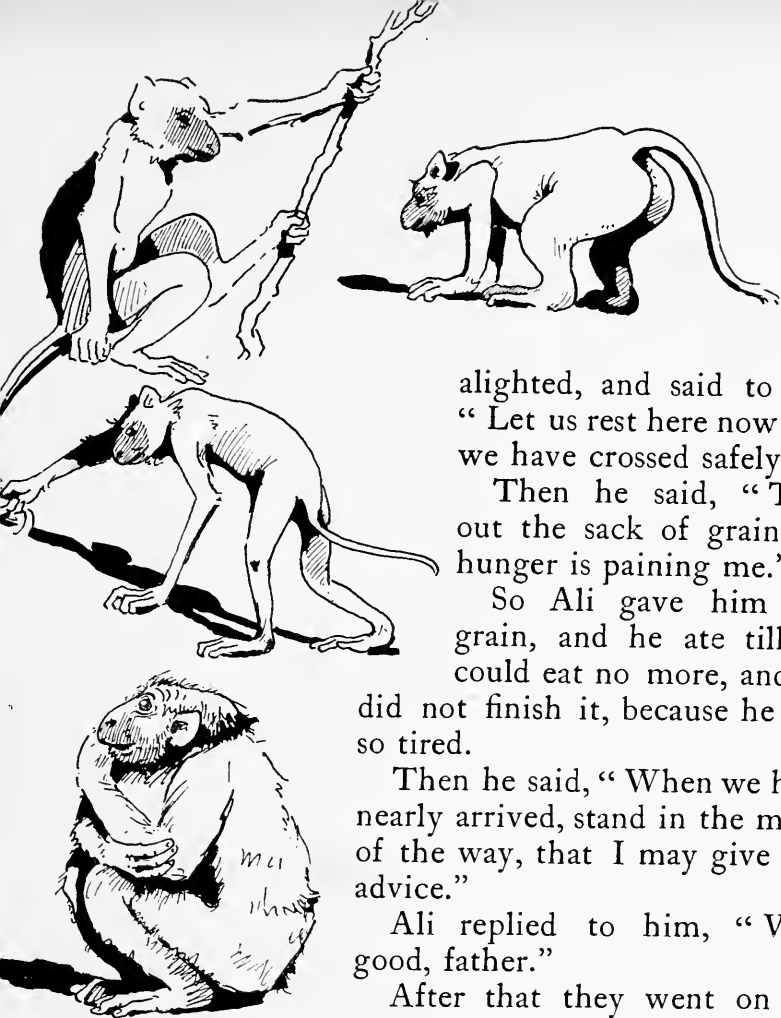
Then the horse said, "Break the bottle of hail." So Ali broke the bottle, and the hail poured down on them, and knocked many of them over, but they got up again and ran on.

The horse said, "Break the bottle of thorns." So Ali broke the bottle, and the thorns got in their feet and delayed many of them, but the rest came on. Ali called out, "There they come," and the horse said, "Break the bottle of mud."

So he broke the bottle, and the demons went slipping and falling about in the mud till they got across it, and still pursued them.

Then the horse said, "Break the bottle of sea." So Ali broke the bottle, and the demons rushed into the sea, where many were drowned, and the rest were unable to cross and turned back.

The horse flew across to the opposite side and



THE
MONKEY-
PEOPLE
OF THE
FORESTS

alighted, and said to Ali,
“Let us rest here now that
we have crossed safely.”

Then he said, “Take
out the sack of grain, for
hunger is paining me.”

So Ali gave him the
grain, and he ate till he
could eat no more, and he
did not finish it, because he was
so tired.

Then he said, “When we have
nearly arrived, stand in the midst
of the way, that I may give you
advice.”

Ali replied to him, “Very
good, father.”

After that they went on till
they were nearly at their journey’s
end, and then Ali stood still in
the middle of the way, and the
horse stood still and said to Ali,

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

"The first counsel I give you, that you must take it to heart, is that when you arrive home you must speak to no one for the space of seven days. If you want to do anything, first ask me, that I may advise you whether to do it or not ; and if you want to marry a wife and place her in your house, you must first ask me.

"And if, when you arrive home, you want to walk abroad, you must first ask me, for I know all things great and small. If you walk out without telling me, that Jin of Jehan will take you ; you will return home no more."

Ali replied, "It is well, father ; I have heard."

Then they journeyed on and went their way.

At three o'clock the people of that town saw a dust coming.

There in the Wazir's house the Wazir himself was on the roof looking out, and his middle son was there with him upstairs ; he and his father were looking out at that road by which Ali had been lost to them.

That Wazir, his hair covered his face, as he had not cut it, and he could not see for weeping for his son.

Then the people of that town saw a won-

ALI OF THE CROOKED ARM

drously big horse soaring and soaring like a kite.

Ali entered the town, but he spoke to no one.

The door of his house had been left open since the day he had set out, and he passed in, he and the horse, but he spoke to no one, and there were great rejoicings at his return.

Ali stayed for the space of seven days, neither speaking to any one, nor drinking water, nor bathing, for fear of being bewitched by that Jin. If he wanted food it was the horse who brought it to him, and if he wanted water it was the horse who gave it to him.

When the eighth day came there was a big festival at the Wazir's and at the Sultan's, for the child who had been dead was alive, he who had been lost to sight was restored to view.

If Ali wanted to walk out it was necessary for him first to take counsel of the horse. On the tenth day Ali brought all his riches downstairs and filled ninety-nine store-rooms full.

So Ali lived, he did not marry nor did he want a wife, and those seven sisters of his, whom he had brought away from amongst the Jins,

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

they did not marry, but they read their Korans night and day.

He built a house of seven storeys, and in this house he put his seven sisters who had come with him from the Jins.

This is the end of the fable.



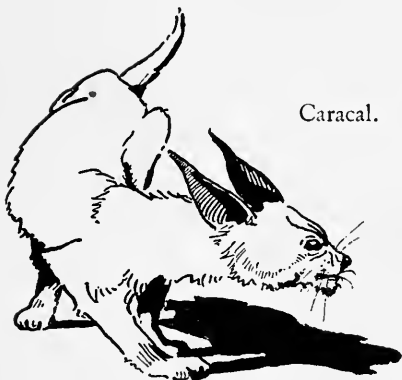
WHITE
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FEEDING THE HUNGRY

XX

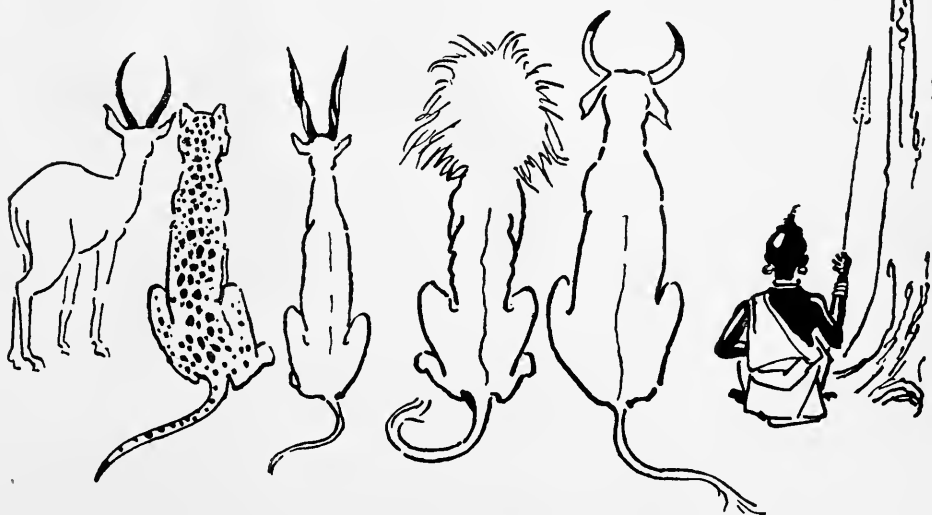
THERE was once upon a time a man, and he took an axe and went into the forest to look for honey. He found a bees' nest in a tree, so he climbed up and began to cut a hole to get at the honey.

Caracal.



Whilst he was in the tree a second man came up ; he was a hunter, and he had been looking for game, but had found none. When the hunter saw that man in the tree he asked him, "What are you cutting ?"

The man replied, "I am looking for honey. If you want any, sit down there and wait for it."



BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

So the hunter sat down, and presently a buffalo came up and, seeing the man in the tree, asked, "What are you doing?"

He replied, "I am looking for honey. If you want any, sit down there beside the hunter."

So the buffalo sat down, and presently a lion came up, and he, too, asked what the man was doing, and the man told him to sit down on one side and wait.

Presently an eland came along and asked the man what he was doing in the tree. He answered, "I am looking for honey. If you want any, sit down there by the lion and wait for it."

So the eland sat down, and presently a leopard came along, and he also the man told to sit on one side and wait for the honey.

Then came up a bushbuck, and the man told him to sit down by the leopard and wait.

Then a gennet came up and asked the man what he was doing. The man replied, "I am

The Gennet.



FEEDING THE HUNGRY

looking for honey. If you want any, sit over there by yourself and wait for it."

So the gennet sat down and waited, and presently a guinea fowl came along and asked the man what he was doing. The man said, "I am looking for honey. If you want any, sit down by the gennet and wait for it."

After that the man went on cutting the tree, and at last made a hole and looked in, and he found that there was no honey in the nest.

All those sitting round asked him, "When are you going to give us our honey?"

The man said, "There is no honey in this nest, but there is no need for you to go hungry. If you are fools it is your own faults."

Then that hunter turned and killed the buffalo, and the lion seized the eland, and the leopard caught the bushbuck, and the gennet got the chicken.

So they were very glad, and said to that man, "You have done very wisely to-day."

That is all.

XXI

SHANI AND TABAK

THIS is a story about a woman and man who were of like wisdom, and so were suited to each other.

Now the beginning of this history is what I will now write. A certain stranger said to his parents, "I am going to journey forth to look for a woman of like wit to myself. If I find her I will marry her, but if I do not find her I will return."

So that man set out, and when he got outside the town he met another man walking. Now this man was the Wali of the town to which he was going, but he did not know that. The Wali called to him, "Wait for me; as we are going the same way let us walk together." That stranger agreed, and both walked together. After they had gone about twenty paces he said to the Wali, "Will you carry me, or shall I carry you?" The Wali did not answer him,



Shani and Tabak.

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

for he thought, "For what reason should he carry me or I carry him, when each one has his own legs?"

They walked on some way, till they arrived at some cultivation. Then the stranger asked, "That millet there, has it been harvested yet or not?"

Now that millet was standing in the stalk with the ears there on them.

The Wali thought, "Surely this man is a fool or blind. How can he ask if this millet has been harvested, and there it is standing?" So he did not reply.

As they came near the town to which they were going they met a funeral coming forth, on its way to the cemetery.

The stranger asked, "Is that man in the bier dead, or is he still alive?"

The Wali thought, "Surely his foolishness is increasing." So he did not reply.

So they entered the town, and the Wali went to his house, whilst the other went to the mosque, for he was a stranger, and knew no one in that town with whom he might stay.

The Wali, after he had arrived at his house,

SHANI AND TABAK

rested awhile, and then said to his wife, "I met a stranger coming here, and I walked with him as far as the town, but that man was a fool, he had no wit; his folly increased at every stage of the journey." Then he told her the words of that man.

The Wali's daughter, who was present, said to him, "My father, you made a mistake leaving that man, you should have brought him here, for he is a man of great understanding."

The father said, "For what reason, my daughter, and his words were as of a madman or a fool?"

His daughter said, "Listen to me and I will explain to you the meaning of his words from first to last.

"The first words which he said to you, were they not, 'Will you carry me, or must I carry you?'

"His meaning was as if he said to you, 'You, will you tell me a story, or shall I tell you one, that we may be beguiled in the way, and that we may not perceive the length of the journey?' That was what he meant by 'Shall I carry you, or will you carry me?'

"His next words were, 'Has this millet been

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN



harvested or not yet harvested?' His meaning was, 'Has the owner of that millet planted or cultivated his field without having to borrow money to do so? If he has had to borrow the wherewithal with which to cultivate, surely he has already harvested his field, for he has to pay away his profit.'

"Lastly, when he saw the bier and asked, 'Is that man dead or alive?' he meant, 'Has that man any children? If he has left a child he is alive although he is dead, for his name is still there. If he has no child he himself is dead, and his name also is dead.'

"Those were the meanings of his words, so, father, you did wrong to let him go away by himself to the mosque."

But her father, the Wali, would not believe that, and said, "No, he is only a fool, and his words have no meaning."

SHANI AND TABAK

Then his daughter said to him, "Wait, I will show you that my words are true, and that this is a man of great wisdom."

Then she took a large round loaf, and she prepared a fowl, and put all over it chopped eggs, and poured out a jug brimful of sweetened milk. She gave these to a slave girl and said to her, "Take these, and bear them to the stranger in the mosque, and say to him, 'My mistress greets you, and sends you word that the moon is full, the tides are spring tides, and that there are many stars in the heavens.'"

So the slave came to the mosque, and the stranger ate, and when he had finished he gave back the plates and said to her, "Give your mistress my greetings, and tell her that the day is the thirteenth of the lunar month, and that the tides are neap tides, and that the stars are only one by one in the heavens."

The slave returned and gave her mistress the stranger's message.

Then the girl said to her father, "This slave girl has thieved, she has broken off a piece of the bread, taken some of the eggs, and drunk some of the milk."

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

Next day she sent another slave girl with food, as before, and gave her the same message. The stranger answered as at first.

Then the girl said to her father, "This slave has also stolen some of the food like the first one did."

On the third day she sent some food, as before, and the same message with another slave girl.

This time the stranger sent back the message, "To-day the moon is full, the tides are spring tides, and there are many stars in the heavens."

So she said to her father, "This one has not stolen."

Her father asked her, "How do you know, my daughter?"

She replied, "The meaning of the moon being full was that the big round bread was whole. When the stranger replied that the day was the thirteenth I knew that a piece of the bread was gone, and that it was as the moon is on the thirteenth day of the lunar month. The meaning of the many stars in the heavens was that the dish was covered with pieces of chopped egg. When he told me that the stars were only one by one in the heavens, I knew that

SHANI AND TABAK

some of the food had been taken, but when he said that there were many stars, I knew that the food was covered all over with the egg, and so that the chicken underneath was safe.

"The meaning of the tides being spring tides was that the jug was brimful of milk ; but when he sent word that the tides were neap tides, I knew that some of the milk had been taken. So you see, my father, that this stranger is a man of wisdom."

Then the Wali was very sorry that he had not understood the stranger's words, and that he had not asked him to his house. So he went straightway to the mosque to look for him, and when he had found him he brought him home again and gave him food, and asked his pardon, saying, "I did not at first understand your words, now I know their meaning."

The stranger said to him, "How is it that now you know ?"

The Wali replied, "There in the road I was suffering from the length of the journey and fatigue from the heat of the sun. After I had rested, and been fanned by the cool breeze in my house, I came to understand."

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

The stranger said, "Tell me then."

So the Wali told him the meaning, and the stranger then said, "Tell me truly, who was it who told you the meaning of my words?" and he pressed him much, till at last the Wali said, "It was my daughter who told me."

Then the stranger said, "That daughter of yours is my desire, she is the one whom I would wish to put in my house. I have been looking for a person like this your daughter, and now I have found her, ask of me anything, that I may give it you, that you may marry me to her; for I will have no life if I do not get a wife like that."

The father said, "I must go and consult with my child herself."

The stranger replied, "That is well, go and consult her, but what she answers tell me truly, do not hide it from me."

So the Wali went to his daughter and gave her all the news from first to last. Then he said, "Now, my daughter, the counsel and the choice are yours alone."

She answered him, "And I, if I do not get a husband like that, I want no other, and will

SHANI AND TABAK

choose to remain unmarried until I die. For if I do not get a husband like that, to me there is no advantage; it will be like two women marrying one another."

So the Wali went and gave her answer to the stranger, and he rejoiced greatly, for he had got his desire.

So her father married her to him, and this is the end of the story.

Now Shani was the name of that stranger, and Tabak was the name of that woman who became his wife. Even now there are those who talk of Shani and Tabak, meaning some one obtaining his heart's desire, as Shani got Tabak, or who use these names for two people who are exactly suited to one another, as Shani was to Tabak.



A MAN & HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW.

XXII

THERE was once a man, and he went and married a girl and went to live with her in her village.

One day that girl's mother came to him and said, "My son-in-law, I want you to do something for me. See, all my maize is being broken by the wind. You must go out and drive away the wind for me, so that it does not break my maize."

So that son-in-law went out into the fields and tried all day to drive away the wind, but he was unable to ; the wind got the better of him, and in the evening he returned discomforted.

A MAN AND HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW

Then he thought to himself, "My mother-in-law is a very bad person. Who would try to drive away the wind? It is not possible. Now I will find something that she is unable to do, and tell her to do it, so that she also will be discomforted."

So he went out into the bush and killed an animal and brought it back to the village. Then he called his wife and said to her, "Take this meat and give it to your mother, and tell her to cook and eat all the meat, but that she is to keep the gravy for me, and that she must spread out the gravy on the matting, so as to be ready for me."

So that girl brought the meat to her mother and gave her the message. The mother-in-law then cooked and ate the meat, but left the gravy. Then she took it and tried to spread it out on the matting for her son-in-law, but it ran through.

Then that girl came and told her husband, "That gravy is not spreadable. Mamma has tried to spread it out on the mat for you, but it has all run through."

Her husband answered her, "Your mother is a very bad person. One day she told me to

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

drive away the wind from the maize, and I tried all day, and it was not possible. So I, too, wished to tell your mother to do something that was not possible ; so I told her to spread out the gravy on the mat. I knew that she would be defeated, even as I was defeated."

THE JACKAL

THE HARE AND THE
COCK



XXIII

ONCE upon a time there was a hare who was cunning with great guile. That hare went to the jackal and said, "I want to make friends with you, jackal. Our friendship will be that we walk about together and agree in every matter. Everything that I do you must do also, and everything that you do I must also do."

When the jackal heard those words of the hare he was very pleased, and he thought, "This will be very good to have the hare for a brother, for he is very clever."

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

So the jackal agreed to make friends with the hare, and they walked about together. Till one day the hare said to the jackal, "To-day, my brother, we will each take a knife and a spear, and we will go and kill our mothers. I will go and kill mine, and you, jackal, must go and kill yours."

So they each took a spear and a knife and went their ways to kill their mothers. The hare went to his mother and took her and hid her in a cave. Then he went to a tree which is called Mtumbati and smeared his knife and spear with the sap of that tree, which is red. Then he returned to the place at which he had agreed to meet the jackal.

Now the jackal was very grieved when he was told that he must kill his mother, and being without guile he said to himself, "I will stay away for a little while, and then say to my brother, the hare, that I have killed my mother."

So he went off, and returned again to the place of meeting, and there met the hare. The hare asked him, "Have you killed your mother, my brother?"

The jackal said, "Yes, I have killed her."

THE JACKAL, HARE, AND COCK

So the hare said, "Let me look at your spear and knife. See, here are mine, and you can see that I have killed my mother, truly."

Then was the jackal ashamed, and the hare said to him, "Oh, my brother, you have deceived me. We agreed that each one must do as the other, and now I have gone and killed my mother, and you have not done likewise. We must both go and kill your mother, so that we may both be without our mothers."

So they went and killed the jackal's mother, and the jackal was very sorry.

After that the hare said to the jackal, "Now, my brother, we must eat nothing but insects." So they went about the forest trying to catch insects to eat, but when the jackal slept the hare used to run into that cave where he had hidden his mother, and she fed him.

The jackal lived with the hare, trying to catch enough insects to eat, and he grew thinner and thinner, till at last he died.

Now when all the animals heard how the hare had deceived the jackal, and made him kill his mother, and how he had made him live on nothing but insects till he died, they were very

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

angry with the hare. Then they held a meeting, and it was asked, "Who is a match for the hare in cunning?"

The cock said, "I am ; I am able to deceive the hare and kill him."

All those animals said to the cock, "You, cock, are not the equal of the hare. What sort of cunning have you to match yourself against the hare?"

The cock replied, "I know very well that I can get the better of the hare. Now I am going off to see him, and you will all hear the news of what has passed between the hare and me very soon."

So the cock set forth and went to see the hare.

The hare asked him, "How is it that you have never before walked out to our house here? To-day is the first time that I have seen you, oh cock."

The cock answered, "Your words are true. I have never yet walked as far as your house. To-day I have come to ask your friendship, for I have no friend. That is why I want your friendship. We will get on very well together, and now I am going to return home. I will

THE JACKAL, HARE, AND COCK

prepare food for you, and to-morrow you must come and see me and we will have a talk."

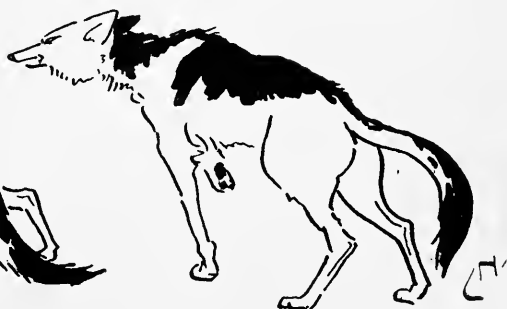
The hare replied, "It is well. To-morrow, if Allah pleases, I will come to your house."

The cock then returned home and told his wives, "To-morrow my friend the hare is coming, so get food ready for him. When the hare comes I will sit in the courtyard and hide my head under my wing. Serve up food to the hare, and when he asks, 'Where is my friend the cock?' show him his friend and say, 'There is his body lying in the courtyard, but he has sent his head away to have audience of the Sultan, and to speak his cases for him.' Tell the hare like that."

So next day, when the hare came and asked for his friend the cock, the cock's wives took him, and showed him the cock where he was lying with his head under his wing, and they told him, as they had been



AFRICAN
BLACK-BACKED
JACKALS



BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

taught, that his head had gone away to speak his cases for him before the Sultan. Then they took him on to the verandah and bade him sit down and await his friend and eat the food that was ready for him.

That hare was very astonished, and said to himself, "My friend the cock must indeed be strong if he can send his head by itself all the way to the Sultan's, to speak his cases alone without a body."

They set much food before the hare, and he ate there in the verandah. Presently the cock came round the corner and said to the hare, "Oh, my friend, I am indeed sorry that I was not here to greet you, but I had to send my head away to speak of some very important matter to the Sultan."

The hare said, "It is well, my friend. I saw your body lying out there in the courtyard, and now that your head has returned it is indeed well."

Shortly after that the hare took leave of the cock, and said to him, "I am now going home, and to-morrow you must come and eat with me."

The cock agreed, and the hare went off.

THE JACKAL, HARE, AND COCK

When he arrived at his house he said to his wives, "Prepare food, for to-morrow my friend the cock comes to see me." So they prepared food for the cock, and next day the hare said to them, "My friend the cock is very strong, he can send his head all alone to the Sultan's. Now I want you, my wives, to cut off my head and put it on one side, and when the cock comes show him my body, and tell him that I have also important cases at the Sultan's, and have sent my head off to see to them."

His wives said, "You will certainly die, our husband."

The hare said, "Why shall I die? My friend the cock cuts off his head, and he does not die, so why should I? You must cut off my head, and after the cock has sat down and begun to eat you must put it on again, so that I may come and talk to him."

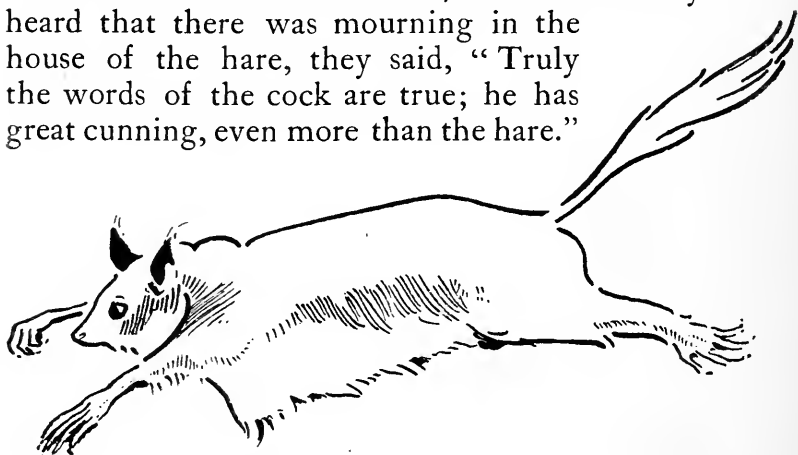
His wives refused, but he pressed them much, till at last they agreed and cut off his head. When the cock came and asked after the hare they took him and showed him the hare's body, and told him as they had been taught. When the cock looked at the hare's body he saw that

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

his head had really been cut off, so he said to those wives of the hare, "I am not able to wait for your food, for to-day in your house there is a great mourning, and it is I who have deceived the hare; so now I am going home. Your husband is not able to rise again, for he is dead. Good-bye."

The cock went forth, and went his way to give the news to all the animals who had laughed at him, and said to him, "You have no sort of guile with which to deceive the hare."

When the animals heard the news of how the cock had deceived the hare, and when they heard that there was mourning in the house of the hare, they said, "Truly the words of the cock are true; he has great cunning, even more than the hare."



AFRICAN
FLYING
SQUIRREL

XXIV

THE MAGIC DATE TREES

ONCE upon a time there was a man, and he married a wife and had two sons.

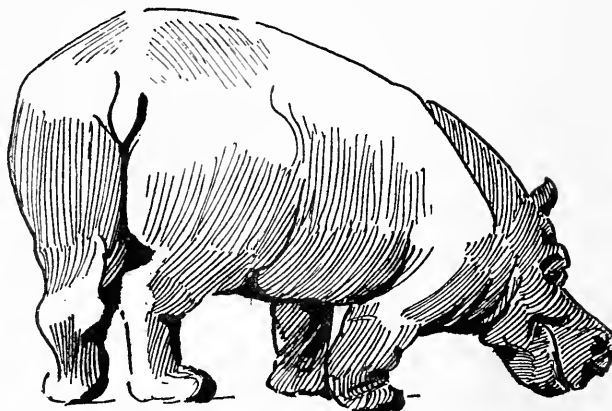
After many days his wife died, and the man stayed awhile, and then he married again.

Those two sons grew up, till at last their father died.

So their step-mother turned them out of the house and they travelled away.

Now they were very poor, and had no money, nor had they any food.

So they travelled on, and by day they journeyed and ate of the fruits of the forest, and at night



BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

they climbed into a tree and slept there, for fear of the wild beasts of the jungle.

Till after many days they arrived at a town, and when they came there the elder brother said to the younger, "You, my brother, sit here outside the town while I go in and beg for food."

Now it so perchanced that the chief of that town had just died and he left no son. So the people of that place had gone to the astrologers and soothsayers and had asked them, "How shall we choose another chief?"

The astrologers had answered them, "Let there be a meeting of all the people of the town, and let a lime be thrown into their midst. He on whom this lime shall fall, take him and make him your chief."

Now when the elder of the two brothers entered the town he found all the people of that place assembled in the centre of that town.

As he drew near to this congregation a lime hit him on the head, and all the people turned and, rushing at him, seized him and placed him in their midst.

So he was greatly afeared.

THE MAGIC DATE TREES

They took him, crying out, "This is our chief!" and they carried him to the palace amidst general acclamation.

So he sat there as chief of that town and during that day and the next he was afraid to say that he had a brother outside the town awaiting for his return.

On the third day he sent soldiers to look for him, but they found him not, for when he perceived that his brother did not return he was afraid and went away.

So the elder brother remained as chief of that place for many months, and he sat with sorrow for the thought of his brother.

Till one day he looked out of the window and saw below in the street a poor man selling mats, and when he beheld him he recognised him as his brother.

So he sent out soldiers to bring him into the palace.

When the younger brother saw the soldiers, and was told that the chief of the town had sent for him, he feared exceedingly.

He was brought into the palace, and his brother was very joyful to see him again, and he

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

honoured him greatly, and made him as his Wazir.

So after that they lived together, and they ordered the affairs of that town, and grew very prosperous.

Now when the chief of that town had grown very rich he looked upon a certain woman and beheld her very beautiful, and desired much to take her for his wife.

Outside the town there was a creek, and over this creek ran a bridge, but at low tide there was no water under the bridge.

The woman said to him, "Not till you pile up wealth from the ground below the bridge up to its top, and give it all to me as my marriage portion, will I marry you."

So the chief collected all his wealth and piled it up from beneath the bridge, and, when he had exhausted all his property, it just reached level with the top of the bridge.

So that woman said to him, "Give me a respite of four hours and then will I marry you."

So she went away, and she prepared a dish of chicken and eggs and curry, and with it she

THE MAGIC DATE TREES

mixed opium and Indian hemp, and she sent it to him as he was awaiting her.

He ate of this dish, and he lost consciousness from the strength of the opium and Indian hemp.

Then she came with her slaves, and some of them she ordered to take him out to sea in a boat and cast him away, while the remainder took all the wealth of the chief and put it in her house.

So those slaves took him and, putting him in a boat, rowed him far out to sea and cast him in.

Now it so happened that he was washed on to a shoal, and when he recovered his senses he found himself sitting on a sandspit.

He gazed all round him, and could see no land in any direction.

Then he looked behind him and saw that the sandspit came from a small island, and on this island were two date trees.

He came to the first tree, and he saw that there were growing dates on it, but they were as yet unripe.

As he felt the pangs of hunger he plucked a date from this tree and ate it ; immediately there grew out of his mouth two large tusks of

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

ivory. These were so heavy in his mouth that he could hardly stand.

On the second tree he perceived that there were also dates and that these were ripe.

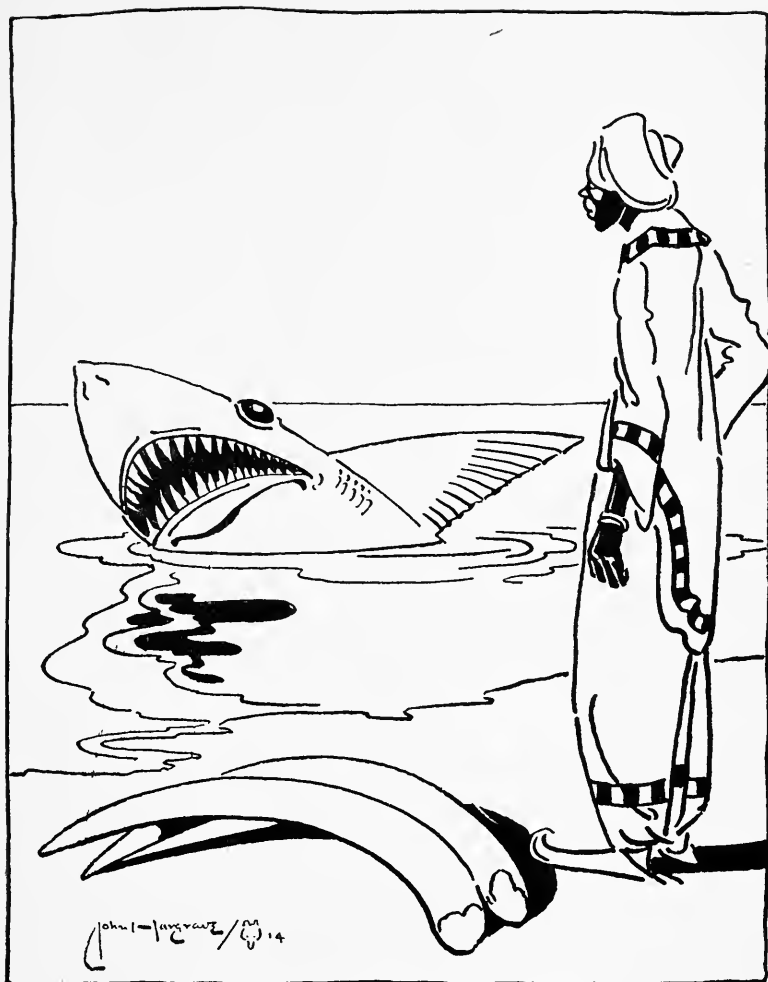
He thought to himself, "Here I am without food, and there is no land in sight. I will most certainly die of hunger and thirst, and now, in addition to all my troubles, I have two tusks growing from my mouth, and they are of such a weight that I can scarcely move. Perhaps if I eat of this second tree I will die, and then my troubles will be at an end."

So he plucked a date from the second tree and ate it. Immediately he had eaten it his tusks dropped off on to the ground.

At that moment there appeared a shark who was swimming past in the sea, and the shark stopped and asked him what he was doing.

He told him how he had found himself cast on this island, and asked the shark to take him to the shore. The shark refused, saying, "You are my enemy, and it is you sons of men who kill and eat me."

So he said to the shark, "I am the Sultan of such and such a town, and if you carry me away



At that moment there appeared a shark.

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

from this island I will give an order that the fishermen of the town kill no more sharks."

So they made an agreement after this manner, and the shark consented to take him on his back.

Then the man plaited two small baskets of date leaves, and the one he filled with dates from the first tree, and the other he filled with dates from the second.

Then he took his two baskets and climbed on to the shark's back, and the shark carried him till they arrived in sight of the shore.

Then the shark said to him, "I am afraid to go any nearer the shore, for if the sons of men see me they will kill me."

So he called a Tewa fish and asked him to take the chief the remaining distance to the shore. But the Tewa fish said to him, "You are one of the sons of men, and you are our enemies, for it is you who kill and eat us."

So the man made a compact with the Tewa fish, that if he carried him safely to the shore he would give out an order to the fishermen making it unlawful to kill Tewa fish.

So the Tewa agreed, and he climbed on to his back and was brought safely to the shore.

THE MAGIC DATE TREES

When he arrived he got off the Tewa's back and, taking his two little baskets, came to his brother's house.

Now there was no more wealth left to him, for all his property he had given that woman.

He said to himself, "Let me try now and see if these dates will do the same to others as they did to me."

So he took the basket of unripe dates and gave one to every one in the house, and behold, they all grew tusks of great size.

All of them were then very angry with him, but he took the second basket, and when each had eaten one of the dates their tusks dropped off.

Then he called a slave of the household and gave him dates of the first basket and told him, "Go and hawk these dates in the town, but you must only sell to such and such a person," and he told him the name of the woman whom he had wished to marry, and who had all his property.

That woman was now exceedingly rich, and she had all his wealth and all the properties and plantations of the town in her possession.

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

Now as the slave passed her house she was looking out, with her head outside the window ; and she called the slave and asked what he was selling.

He replied, " I am selling these dates," and he offered her one, and handed it up for her to taste.

So she took it and ate it there as she was leaning out of the window, and immediately there grew from her mouth two tusks of such size that she was unable to withdraw her head from the window.

So she remained there all that night, and on the next day she sent a crier round the town saying, " Who will deliver me from here, where I am fixed, I shall give him a great reward."

On the next day she was still in the window, and she sent a crier round the town to say, " Who will deliver me, I shall marry him and give him half my property."

On the third day she was still stuck there, and on this day she sent a crier round to say, " Who will deliver me to-day I shall give him all my property and I shall become his slave."

The chief sent round a slave to say, " I want a signed document to this effect."

THE MAGIC DATE TREES

So the woman wrote and signed the document as required, while she was still fixed there in the window, and it was taken to the chief.

Then he came there and gave her a date of the second basket, and immediately the tusks dropped off and she was freed.

So the chief received back all his wealth and property, and he lived in happiness and prosperity, he and his brother, while the woman became his slave.



PAKA THE CAT

XXV

THIS is the story of Paka the cat.

If there are three or four men walking along and only one woman, the cat will turn aside from the men and follow the woman.

Now the reason for this is the story I am telling you.

In the beginning Paka sat in the bush, till one day she felt the pain of hunger.

So she came down to the shore, and there she met a serval, who was hunting the crabs of the shore. So Paka went up to the serval and said, "Good morning."

And the serval said, "Who are you?"

"It is I—Paka."

"What do you want?"

PAKA THE CAT

"I want to follow you about and so get food."

So the serval said, "Very good then. Here, eat these crabs."

So Paka ate of the crabs, and she followed the serval many days.

Till one day there came a leopard and fought with the serval and killed him.

So Paka thought in her heart, "Now, this one was not a manly one : he who is the man is the leopard." So Paka went up to the leopard and saluted him, "Good morning."

So the leopard said, "And who are you ?"

"It is I—Paka."

"What do you want ?"

"I want to follow you about and get food."

So the leopard said, "Very good. Here, eat of this serval."

So Paka followed the leopard many days and many weeks.

Till one day came a lion, and he fell on the leopard and killed him.

So Paka thought in her heart, "Now, this one also was not a manly one : he who is the man is the lion."

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

So she went to the lion and said, "Good morning."

And the lion said, "Who are you?"

"It is I—Paka."

"What do you want?"

So Paka said, "I want to follow you about that you may give me food."

So the lion said, "Then eat of this leopard."

So Paka ate of the leopard, and she followed the lion for many weeks and many months, till one day there came an elephant.

And the elephant came and struck the lion with his trunk, and the lion died.

So Paka said in her heart, "Now, this one, too, was not a manly one: he who is the man is the elephant."

So Paka went and greeted the elephant, "Good morning."

The elephant said, "And who are you?"



THE
LEOPARD

PAKA THE CAT

"It is I—Paka."

"What do you want?"

"I want to follow you about, that you may give me food."

So the elephant said, "Then eat of this lion."

So Paka ate of the lion, and she followed the elephant for many months and many days.

Till one day came a man; and that son of Adam came and he took his matchlock and fired.

And he hit the elephant, and the elephant ran away.

After running a long way he fell down, and that son of Adam came and he fired again and again, until the elephant was finished and he died.

Now Paka said, "Behold, he also was not a manly one: he who is the man is the son of Adam."

So Paka went up and saluted him, saying, "Good morning."

And the man said, "Who are you?"

"It is I—Paka."

"What do you want?"

"I want to follow you about, that you may give me food."

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

So the man said, "Then eat of the elephant."

So Paka stayed with the man and ate of the elephant, while he was cutting out the tusks.

When the man had finished cutting out the tusks he wended his way home, and came to his village.

Now that man had two wives, and the one he loved and the other he loved not.

So he came first to the house of her whom he loved not, that he might stay a short time, and go to the house of her whom he loved.

So he came there and greeted the wife whom he loved not, and straightway went on to the house of her whom he loved.

When he had come there he said to her, "Oh, my wife whom I love, I have done this on purpose.

"I came first to the house of the other one, that I might come straightway to you whom I love, and remain with you a long time."

Now the woman was angry, in that he had gone first to the house of the other, and she said to him, "What you say is false!"

So she came up to him and struck him—
pah!

PAKA THE CAT

That man did not do anything ; he turned round and left the hut.

Then thought Paka, " Now, even this one is not the manly one. Why does he go away ? He who is the man is the woman."

So she went up to the woman and said to her, " Good morning."

The woman said, " And who are you ? "

" It is I—Paka."

" What do you want ? "

" I want to follow you about, that you may give me food."

So the woman said to her, " Very good. Sit here in my house."

Now this is the story of Paka the cat, which comes from long ago, and this is the reason why a cat will leave a man and follow a woman.

XXVI

THE TALE OF THE MERCHANT AND HIS BAG OF GOLD

ONCE upon a time there was a merchant, and he resolved to go on a journey to a far country to trade, that he might return with profit.

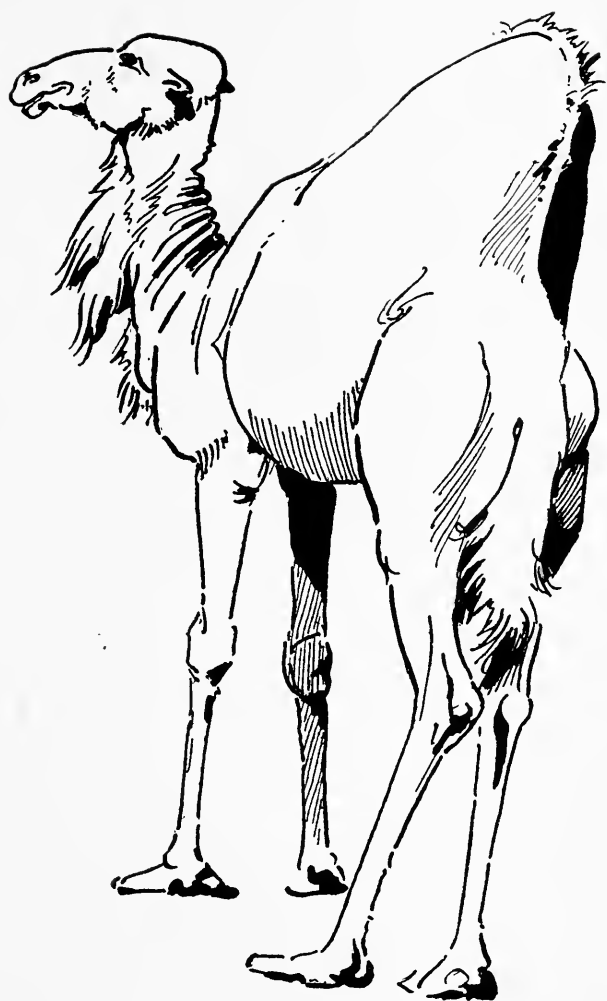
Now this merchant took money needful for his journey, and of what he had left he was afraid that in his absence it might be stolen.

So he thought to himself, "If I leave this bag of gold in my house it may be stolen, and if I give it to a friend to keep for me he may use it for his own purposes."

So he bethought himself of a stratagem.

He poured all his gold into the bottom of a large leather skin. When he had done this he took oil of coco-nuts and filled the skin with it and fastened it securely at the mouth.

Then he took the skin of oil to a neighbour, who was a friend of his, and said to him, "Oh, my friend, I have resolved to go on a journey,



BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

and wish to leave this skin of coco-nut oil with you. Will you keep it safely for me, that I may find it on my return ?”

So the friend agreed, and he set out on his journey, and he journeyed to a very far country.

So the friend kept the skin of coco-nut oil for the first year and for the second year.

In the third year, however, he said to himself, “Surely my friend has met with some evil happening on his journey and will come back no more. It were better, then, that I open this skin and use the oil therein.”

So he opened the skin and used the oil for many months, till one day, when he had nearly emptied the skin, he perceived that there was some matter other than oil in the skin.

He emptied out the remainder of the oil and behold, the bottom was full of golden dinars.

So he rejoiced exceedingly, and took the money and put it in a secret place, and the skin he left there in his house.

Now shortly after this the merchant, who had been delayed by unfavourable winds, returned from his journey.

He had been to many far countries and made

TALE OF THE MERCHANT

traffic in merchandise, and after many hardships and troubles he was enabled to return.

Now when his friend heard of his return he was exceedingly troubled in his heart.

For he thought to himself, "What shall I do that I may keep all these monies?" and he said to himself, "Now my friend did not say that he was entrusting me with a skin of dinars, he said only that he had left a skin of oil."

So he went to the bazaar and sought for coco-nut oil and brought it to his house, and he filled up the skin with the oil he had brought, and he fastened it securely, after the same manner in which it had been done up formerly.

Now when the merchant had rested awhile he set off straightway to the house of his friend, and he saluted him. His friend bade him draw nigh, and he asked him for the news of his journey.

So they conversed awhile, and then the merchant said, "The night is closing in; I must with your permission now return to my house."

As he took leave of him he feigned to have suddenly remembered the skin which he had left in his house, and he said to him, "My

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

friend, have you that skin of oil I left with you ? ”

So his friend said, “I had forgotten about it, but perhaps it will be in my store, where it has lain since you left. I will go and look for it.”

So he entered into the house, and presently came forth with the skin and said, “Here it is, my friend ; I have found it safe and sound.”

So the merchant took his skin and went his way.

When he reached his house he opened it with haste to look for his dinars.

He poured out the oil, but behold, the gold was not there. Then was he seized with great wrath ; so he poured back the oil and ran back to his friend’s house and asked him, “Where are the golden dinars I left with you ? ”

His friend asked him, “What golden dinars did you leave with me ? You left only that skin of oil, which I have now returned to you. I have kept it all these days for you, and now you accuse me of having taken some golden dinars.”

So the merchant said, “The golden dinars



The Merchant and his oil-skin.

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

were in the bottom of that skin of oil, but now they are not there."

His friend said to him, "You are a very cunning man. You told me yourself that it was only a skin of oil you left me. Now you say that it was full of dinars, that I may be beaten and imprisoned without cause."

Then was the merchant exceedingly angry, and went straightway to accuse his friend before the Sultan. So the Sultan had his friend called and asked him, "Did the merchant leave with you a skin full of dinars?"

The friend replied, "No, by Allah, he left with me only a skin of oil, and that I have returned."

The merchant said, "By Allah, three years ago, when I left on a journey, I entrusted him with a skin full of dinars, but my heart was afraid, and so I told him that it was a skin of coco-nut oil. On my return, when I searched in the skin, I found but oil, and that the dinars had been extracted."

The friend said, "By Allah, it was a skin of oil he left with me, and I gave it him back unopened as I had received it."

When the Sultan had heard the words of both

TALE OF THE MERCHANT

men he was unable to decide which of the two was in the wrong, and so he dismissed the case. Now the merchant left the audience hall, and his heart was very sore at the loss of his wealth. As he went forth he met an oil merchant of that town, and he asked of him the news, and he told him the whole story from the beginning to the end.

When the oil merchant had heard his story he said to him, "Now if I am able to make the Sultan decide the case in your favour what payment will you make me?"

So they agreed together, and he said, "I will give you the half of whatever money is restored to me."

So the oil merchant went quickly to his shop and poured out two bottles of oil, and in the one bottle he left the oil as it was, while to the second he added a little dye, which made its colour darker than the first.

Then he sought out a friend and told him the whole matter, promising him half the reward if he would help him in the case.

So the two went to the Sultan, and the oil merchant asked audience of the Sultan.

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

When he came before the Sultan he said to him, "Oh Sultan, I have a complaint to make against this man. He is in my employ and comes daily to work in my shop.

"Now my trade is the crushing of coco-nuts and the retailing of oil, which I sell at my shop, and in my store I have many vats of oil.

"Now yesterday, after this man had left my shop, I noticed that the oil was decreased in one of the vats, and I went to the house of this one and I found him in the possession of a skin of oil."

So the Sultan turned to the accused and said to him, "Are these words true?"

So the accused said, "No, they are false, for the oil which was found in my house was oil which I had bought elsewhere and paid for with my own money."

So the Sultan turned to the oil merchant and said to him, "Do you hear his words? Have you any proof that the oil you found in his house came from your vat?"

So the oil merchant said, "Yes, oh Sultan, I have proof, for the oil in that vat was very old oil, three years in age, and therefore of a different

TALE OF THE MERCHANT

colour to the oil of this year. Now no other merchant in this town has any oil of this age."

Then he brought forth the two bottles of oil, and, taking the one he had dyed, said, "Now this is oil from that same vat, and the oil found in this man's house was of the same colour."

Taking the second bottle he said, "This is oil of this year, and, as you will perceive, it is of a lighter colour."

Then the Sultan turned to the accused and said to him, "You have heard his words; what words have you to answer him with?"

Then the man fell on his face before the Sultan and said, "Oh, I repent, my master; I did take the oil, for I am a poor man and have no money, so forgive me, for I repent."

Now when the Sultan heard that the oil of three years ago was of a different colour, he bethought himself of the case of the merchant and his friend, in which the merchant had entrusted his friend with the skin of oil three years previously. So, telling the oil merchant to stand aside, he sent quickly to recall the case.

When they came before him he said to the merchant's friend, "When did you say that it

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

was that you were given that skin of oil by the merchant ? ”

He answered him, “ It is now three years since.”

So the Sultan asked him, “ Have you since then opened the skin or taken any of the oil out ? ”

He answered, “ No, by Allah, I returned it just as he gave it to me.”

So the Sultan commanded the skin to be brought, and then he called for the oil merchant to bring forth his two bottles of oil.

When he compared the oil in the skin with that in the bottles he found that it was like that of the lighter colour.

So the Sultan said to the man, “ How is this now, that if you received this three years ago and have not opened it since, that the oil in the skin is oil of this year ? ”

Then was the man exceedingly afraid, and he trembled, for he knew that he had put fresh oil in the skin.

So the Sultan sent soldiers to his house, who found there the dinars he had secreted away, and they were restored to their owner.

TALE OF THE MERCHANT

Then the Sultan turned to the oil merchant and asked him, "Now is this man truly as he says a poor man?"

So the oil merchant replied, "Yes, truly, my master, he is a very poor man, and I wish to do him no harm."

So the Sultan said, "Then shall I pardon him of his offence."

So the Sultan pardoned the accused, and gave to the oil merchant a reward, in that he had shown him a way to prove the guilt of the merchant's friend.

So the oil merchant took that reward of the Sultan, and also half of the dinars which had been restored to the merchant, as his fee for winning the case for him.

So he took these monies and shared them with the friend who helped him, and they went their way rejoicing.

XXVII

BATA THE DUCK

ONCE upon a time there was a duck called Bata, and she lived with her husband, and they were very happy, for they had never seen the face of man. Till one day there came a man to their home, and he fired his gun and killed Bata's husband.

When she saw that her husband was dead Bata was very unhappy, and flew far, far away to a country where man had never come.

There she met a peahen, and that peahen made friends with her and asked her name. She said, "I am called Bata."

Then she asked her, "Why are you trembling so?"

Bata answered, "Do you know man?"

The peahen said, "No, I have never seen one."

Then said Bata, "I tremble to think of man

BATA THE DUCK

and how he has made me a widow, for he killed my husband."

Then the peahen said, "I have a husband too, and he is very beautiful."

So she took Bata to her husband the peacock, and when Bata saw him she began to weep. That peacock said, "Why do you weep?"

Bata answered, "I weep to see how beautiful you are, and to think that if man sees you he will surely kill you."

"What is this creature called man?" asked the peacock.

"He is a creature of great guile," replied Bata.

After that she travelled on till she came to a big river, and she swam up and up the river till she came to a cave. She looked into the cave and there she saw a lion. The lion asked, "Who are you?"

She replied, "I am Bata the Duck."

Then the lion asked her, "Why are you trembling?"

She answered, "I am trembling to think of man."

The lion asked, "What is this man?"

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

Bata said, "He is a creature of great cunning, who is even able to kill you."

The lion said, "Then this man must be very big and strong."

"No," said Bata, "he is neither big nor strong, but his guile is great."

Just then a dikdik came running past. When it saw the lion it stopped and greeted him. The lion asked, "What are you running from?"

The dikdik said, "I am running away from man."

"What is this man like?" said the lion.

"Oh, he is very cunning," answered the dikdik, and scampered off.

Presently a bushbuck came running up. When it saw the lion it stopped and greeted him. Then the lion asked, "What are you running from?"

The bushbuck said, "I am running from man."

"What is he like?" said the lion.

"Oh, he is very cunning," answered the bushbuck, and ran off.

Next an eland came galloping up, and when he saw the lion he stopped and greeted him. The lion asked, "And whom are you running away from? Is it also this creature called man?"

BATA THE DUCK

The eland answered, "Yes, I am running from man."

The lion said, "This man must be a very big animal, that one of your size should be afraid of him."

"No, he is not big," said the eland, "but his guile is very great."

The eland galloped off, and presently a buffalo came tearing past. When he saw the lion he drew up and greeted him. The lion asked, "And are you also running away from this creature called man?"

The buffalo said, "Yes, it is indeed he from whom I am running."

Then said the lion, "This man must be a great and powerful creature, that one of such a terrifying appearance as you are runs from him."

The buffalo said, "No, he is small, but his guile is exceedingly great."

Then the buffalo rushed off, and presently there



BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

came forth a man. Now that man was a carpenter, and he carried planks under his arm and his bag of tools over his shoulder. Suddenly he looked up and saw the lion, and he said to himself, "Now I am indeed lost, for there is a lion, and I have no weapons."

That lion, when he saw the man, asked him, "Who are you who are walking so slowly and carefully? All the animals who have passed here were running away from the creature called man. How is it that you are not afraid of him, that you do not make haste to escape?"

Then that man saw that the lion did not recognise him for a man, so he took heart, and said, "No, it is not man, but the elephant I am afraid of, for I am the servant of the elephant, and he has called me to make a house for him. For the elephant fears this man whom you speak of, so I now go to make him a house, so that when he goes inside it man cannot get him."

The lion said, "First you must make such a house for me."

That man said, "No, I cannot, for I have promised to make it for the elephant."

But that lion insisted on the man making him

BATA THE DUCK

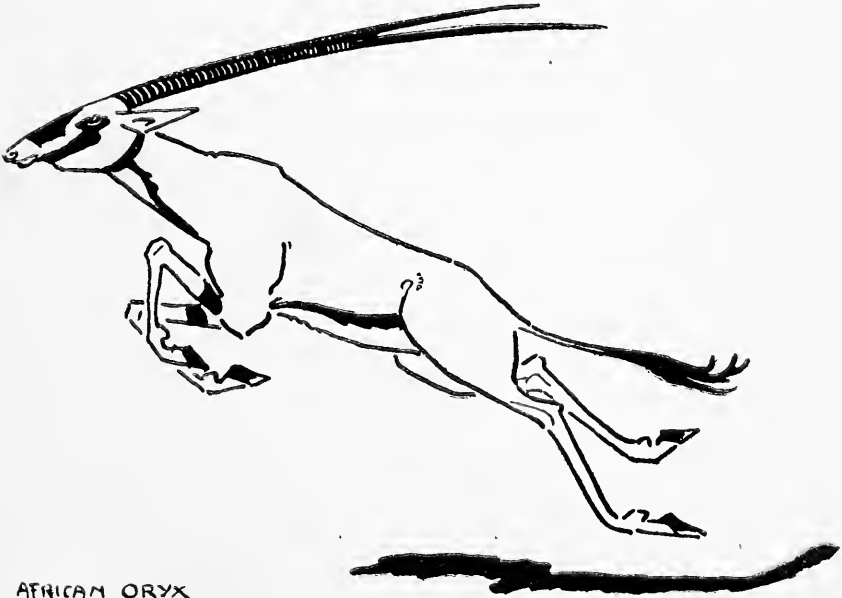
a house first, so that carpenter put down his load and began making a box like a coffin.

When he had finished it he made a door at one end, and then he said to the lion, "Enter in, my master, and see if the house suits you."

So the lion walked in, and the man shut the door and cried, "Now do you know me? I am that creature called man."

Then he took his axe and rained blows on the lion until he had killed him.

When Bata saw this she flew away, and this was the beginning of her sitting always on the water, even to sleeping on the water in the middle of a pool, for fear of man who killed her husband.



AFRICAN ORYX

THE SULTAN'S DAUGHTER

XXVIII

LONG ago in olden times there was a Sultan, and he had a daughter beautiful as the moon at its fulness.

This Sultan said that he would only marry his daughter to a man of wisdom. So to all who came to seek his daughter's hand he asked three questions.

The first was, "When famine comes to a place and leaves it again, where does it go?"

The second was, "When sickness comes to a place and leaves it again, where does it go?"

And the third was, "When war comes to a place and leaves it again, where does it go?"

No one was able to answer these questions for many months and many years, till at last there



THE SULTAN'S DAUGHTER

came a man who said, "I will answer your questions, oh Sultan."

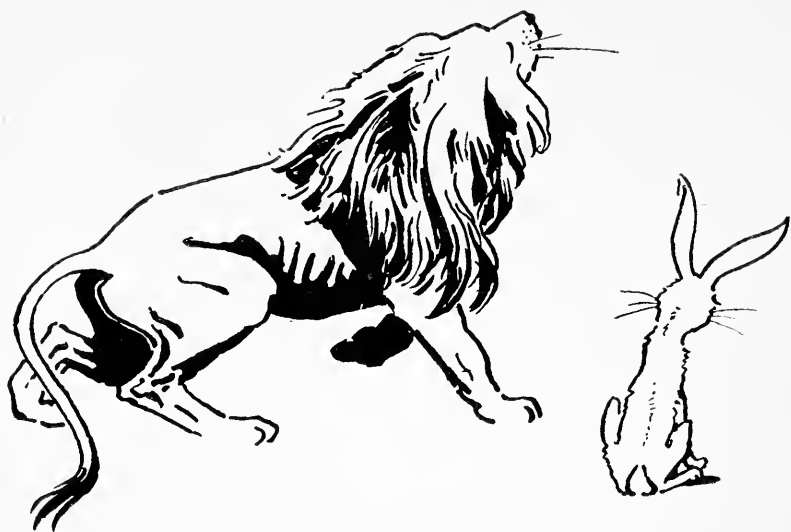
The Sultan replied, "Speak on, stranger."

So that man said, "When famine comes to a country and leaves it again it goes to the idle, for they make no profit and sit always with hunger for a cup-fellow.

"When sickness comes to a country and leaves it again it goes to the aged, for they sit always with sickness and death for a companion.

"When war comes to a country and leaves it again it goes to those men who have more than one wife, for in their houses quarrels never cease."

When the Sultan heard these words he was very pleased, and gave his daughter to the stranger.



XXIX

THE LION, THE HYAENA AND THE HARE

ONCE it happened that a lion, a hyaena and a hare set out on a journey together.

The way was long, and they suffered much from hunger. Till one day, when they were as yet far distant from the end of the journey, they were so sorely pressed by hunger that they gave up all hope of getting any further. Then they took counsel together and said, "Now we shall all die, and not one of us will escape. It were

THE LION, HYAENA, AND HARE

better that we eat one of our number, so that the other two may get the strength to proceed."

So they all agreed that this must be done, but they could not agree as to who should be eaten and who should be saved. At last it was decided that the youngest amongst them should be eaten by the other two.

Then said the lion to the hare, "Now tell us your age, that we may know."

The hare replied, "Am I not the smallest and weakest here? It would not be fitting for me to speak before the great ones. You, my masters, tell your ages first, and then I will speak."

So the lion turned to the hyaena and said, "You must then speak first."

The hyaena thought awhile and then said, "My age is five hundred years old."

The lion then said to the hare, "You have heard the hyaena, now you must speak."

But the hare said, "How can I speak before you, my lord, have spoken?"

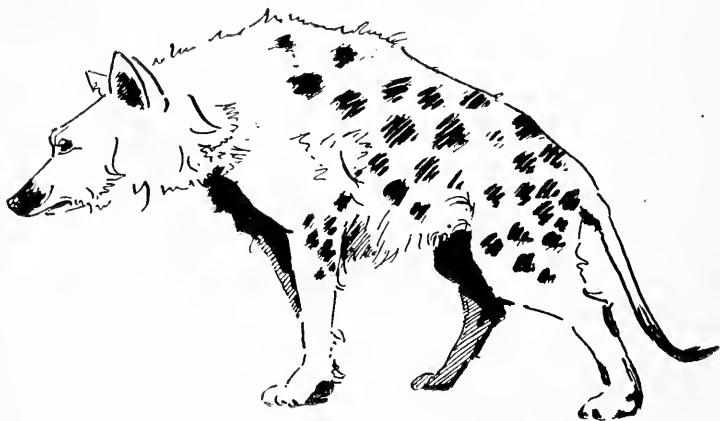
The lion thought and then said, "I am two thousand years old."

When the hare heard these words he wept. The other two asked him why he wept, and he

BLACK TALES FOR WHITE CHILDREN

said, "Oh, my friends, I weep to think of my eldest son, my first born, for it was on a day just two thousand years ago that he died."

So the lion killed the hyaena, and when he and the hare had eaten him they were able to get strength to go on, and they finished their journey in safety.



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 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40
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A 4x10 grid of dots representing a 40-dot grid. The dots are arranged in four rows and ten columns, with some dots missing in the second and third rows to form a pattern.

